

# THE DIAL

SEPTEMBER 1920

## DUST FOR SPARROWS

BY REMY DE GOURMONT

*Translated by Ezra Pound*

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: In June, 1915, Remy de Gourmont wrote to me that because of ill health he could send me, for a proposed literary venture, only "indications of ideas" not "*pages accomplies*." The section of his unpublished work headed *Dust for Sparrows* (*Poudre aux Moineux*) is presumably of that period, physical fatigue, war fatigue combining against the author. I do not offer an excuse for these detached and semi-detached paragraphs; I simply wish to indicate that they must be considered in their relation to the rest of his work. It is not the fault of the present DIAL management that the greater part of his writing did not from 1880 onwards appear simultaneously in France and America; and as they would have done, had there existed proper communication between our two countries; nor that there is not yet an adequate American edition of his already known work. We can but begin with things as we find them and assure the American readers of de Gourmont that they will receive his remaining writings as soon as his own compatriots. This is the first of a series that will appear in *THE DIAL*.

The following pages are not intended as epigrams; they are indications and transitions of thought; in them is the lucidity which had characterized Remy de Gourmont's best work; they are not so highly energized as a selection of passages from thirty of his critical books would be, but they are nearly all concerned with some problem of contemporary philo-

sophy—directly, not as vague general speculation. They are given especially for those to whom de Gourmont's work is familiar; those to whom it is not, will possibly find a finer aroma after consideration of that work as a whole, remembering *Les Chevaux de Diomèdes* and the critical work beginning in *Le Livre des Masques*, which practically established a whole new generation in French literature.

Naturally, the thoughts in such a note-book as the present are of varying degrees of importance; some would have been amplified, others erased; the translator, at any rate, begs to be excused the responsibility of erasure and believes that the giving of a complete text will be the only satisfactory procedure.

Paragraphs marked with an asterisk have already been privately printed in an edition of fifty copies, only in French.]

## THINGS THOUGHT, FELT, SEEN, HEARD, AND DREAMED

### 1

When we believe it needful to say something which we, at any rate, judge useful for the progression of ideas, or the knowledge of verity, we must not hesitate: Better exposure to another's censure than to our own self-contempt.

### 2

A two line peremptory assertion is not always presumptuous; it is a way of forcing meditation.

### 3

We have more difficulty in ascribing consciousness to an inert body than to a living thing. Yet, even among those who deny the existence of the soul, the general idea of the *self* is of something unmoveable and of one piece.

## 4

Even when we arrive at the conviction that free will (*liber arbitrio*) is nothing but an illusion, we still find repugnant a conclusion, thence, that the *self* is a complexity; so greatly do we feel it a unity—so great is the *impression* of unity which we get from it. What prevents us from supposing that the instants of the sensation of being succeed each other, in us, as rapidly as the fragmentary images of the cinema, which in their succession produce the illusion of life?

## 5

The brook-water seems to stop, lazily to reflect the bank's beauties as its mirror: Error: water never the same, running, ever renewed.

## 6

The water again, the agitation of its transparency, now deforming its reflections in confusion, now a veridic mirror, might give us, perhaps, a figure for passing vagrancy of the mind?

## 7

The mechanism of whistling, which instinctively reproduces all the musical modulation, seems to indicate that intelligence is, in origin, purely imitative. Everything is, of necessity, reflected in it; an instability or an uncompellable vibratability obliges the child to reproduce all the sounds he hears, all the movements he sees.

## 8

There is at times a mental activity whereof the mechanism seems inconceivably complicated: as in the faithful execution of a portrait: arduous labour for the brush, it is realized instantly and to perfection in a mirror.

## 9

And, in times past, the civilized exemplified the intellectual torpor of the Pampas Indians by pointing out that when the latter were taken from their huts to a city, they showed no surprise at seeing their faces in mirrors . . . . The mentally torpid being

those who had not taken count of the fact that the earliest men must have been struck by the phenomenon of reflection upon first regarding their features in placid water.

## 10

The idea of God is like a limitless mirror in which the physical and moral image of man passes from the relative to the absolute.

## 11

In the near-arctic, the pale oblique sun and the whitish unanimity of the landscape either suppress shadows almost altogether, or give them excessive value. The gods of Scandinavian mythology may have for origins these colossal figures, fantastic, disproportioned, which the early Norsemen saw before them in the indefinite perspective of the snowscape.

## 12

In the eternal activity of wanting to understand the structure of this thing which thinks, feels, and wills inside itself; there is a something of the infant who turns the mirror about to see if there isn't another *him* hidden behind it.

## 13

If in the new creations of man's wit—however original they appear—we could clearly distinguish all the elements, immediate or distant, from which they derive, as we can with new varieties of plants, their originality would be found reduced to a labour of joining, and one would see that their novelty consists only in the style, that seal of paternity.

## 14

When one analyses the language, seeking the origin and evolution of words, one discovers that there are among the most venerated (*prestigeuses*) phrases, some like Spanish statues covered with gold and velvet, celebrated for their miracles, and having wooden insides.

## 15

Every thought is a stem, potentially flower and fruit; some



suggest, question the unknown, interview truth; some affirm.

[All this little series of paragraphs should be taken in relation to Gourmont's essay on style. E. P.]

## 16

If we cannot think without words, without articulating them mutely to ourselves, as is shown by the movements of our throats and tongues; how can we admit telepathy, lacking a wireless alphabet for its purpose?

## 17

And if this thought transmission were possible, one would have so perfected the process that the Telepathic Company would have already ruined Marconi.

## 18

Wasting my time imagining the mechanism of memory, I have represented it to myself as a noisily crowded department store. The inspectors tell you where a given line is to be found, the clerks are behind their counters, others look up things in the catalogue, and all with order and simplicity in the midst of a terrible apparent confusion.

## 19

When we are persecuted and obsessed by the search for a forgotten word, we unconsciously take note that it has been invoiced, and that it ought to appear. The search is made in the phantom department store without our knowledge, and some one suddenly brings it to us.

## 20

The ages of faith have heaped upon our minds such amassments of rhetoric and mystery, that now, when we seek natural explanations for lofty and beautiful things, we seem to commit a coarse triviality.

## 21

The difference between popular and savant music is very likely

the same as that between lace and packing cloth. Distance enormous, but not perhaps, a matter of substance.

## 22

To judge how high a child's talent will reach, do not attend so much to his greater and smaller facility for assimilating technical notions, but watch to see whether his eyes are occasionally clouded with tears of enthusiasm in the work.

## 23

Melodic and rhythmic music really *says* [Italics mine. E. P.] nothing; but it gives us the impression of hearing marvelous verse the sense of which we think we divine, by means of emotive association. Symphonic music, as it evolves nothing, is merely a prose absolutely denuded of sense, and it gives many people at the opera the impression of facing a Chinese play accompanied on a tom-tom.

## 24 \*

At thirty the spring of curiosity is broken, the mind becomes sedentary; at fifty and after the body can enjoy only table and bed.

## 25

Never have literary works seemed so beautiful to me as when at a theatre, or in reading, because of lack of habit or lacking a complete knowledge of the language, I lost the meaning of many phrases. This threw about them a light veil of somewhat silvery shadow, making the poetry more purely musical, more ethereal. [This is the most dangerous of confessions; it offers a basis for an attack on all the Gourmontian criticism; and yet it is probably true autobiography. The enjoyable, silvery, and ethereal in comprehension may, however, be safer for some minds than for others. E. P.]

*To be continued*

## THE LIFE OF FIVE POINTS

BY EDNA CLARE BRYNER

**A**LIFE went on in the town of Five Points. Five Points, the town was called, because it was laid out in the form of a star with five points and these points picked it out and circumscribed it. The Life that was lived there was in this wise. Over the centre of the town it hung thick and heavy, a great mass of tangling strands of all the colours that were ever seen, but stained and murky-looking from something that oozed out no one could tell from which of the entangling cords. In five directions heavy strands came in to the great knot in the centre and from it there floated out, now this way, now that, loose threads like tentacles, seeking to fasten themselves on whatever came within their grasp. All over the town thin threads criss-crossed back and forth in and out among the heavy strands making little snarls wherever several souls lived or were gathered together. One could see, by looking intently, that the tangling knotted strands and threads were woven into the rough pattern of a star.

Life, trembling through the mass in the centre, streamed back and forth over the incoming strands, irregularly and in ever-changing volume, pulling at the smaller knots here and there in constant disturbance. It swayed the loosely woven mass above the school-house, shaking out glints of colour from the thin bright cords, golden yellows and deep blues, vivid reds and greens. It twisted and untwisted the small black knot above the town hotel. It arose in murky vapour from the large knots above each of the churches. All over the town it quivered through the fine entangling threads, making the pattern change in colour, loosening and tightening the weaving. In this fashion Life came forth from the body which it inhabited.

This is the way the town lay underneath it. From a large round of foot-trampled earth five wide streets radiated out in as many directions for a length of eight or ten houses and yards. Then the wide dirt street became a narrow road, the narrow board walks flanking it on either side stopped suddenly and faintly worn paths carried

out their line for a space of three minutes' walk when all at once up rose the wall of the forest, the road plunged through and was immediately swallowed up. This is the way it was in all five directions from Five Points.

Round about the town forests lay thick and dark like the dark heavens around the cities of the sky, and held it off secure from every other life-containing place. The roads that pierced the wall of the forest led in deeper and deeper, cutting their way around shaggy foothills down to swift streams and on and up again to heights, in and out of obscure notches. They must finally have sprung out again through another wall of forest to other towns. But as far as Five Points was concerned, they led simply to lumber mills sitting like chained ravening creatures at safe distances from one another eating slowly away at the thick woods as if trying to remove the screen that held the town off to itself.

In the beginning there was no town at all, but miles and miles of virgin forest clothing the earth that humped itself into rough-bosomed hills and hummocks. Then the forest was its own. Birds nested in its dense leafage, fish multiplied in the clear-running streams, wild creatures ranged its fastnesses in security. The trees, touched by no harsher hand than that which turns the rhythmically changing seasons, added year by year ring upon ring to their girths.

Suddenly human masters appeared. They looked at the girth of the trees, appraised the wealth that lay hidden there, marked the plan of its taking out. They brought in workers, cleared a space for head-quarters in the midst of their great tracts, cut roads out through the forest, and wherever swift streams crossed they set mills. The cleared space they laid out symmetrically in a tree-fringed centre of common ground encircled by a main street for stores and offices, with streets for houses leading out to the edge of the clearing. In the south-east corner of the town they set aside a large square of land against the forest for a school-house.

Thus Five Points was made as nearly in the centre of the great uncut region as it could well be and still be on the narrow-gauge railroad already passing through to make junction with larger roads. In short order there was a regular town with a station half-way down the street where the railroad cut through and near it a town hotel with a bar; a post office, several stores, a candy shop and a dentist's office fronting the round of earth in the centre; five

churches set each on its own street and as far from the centre of the town as possible; and a six-room school-house with a flagpole. One mile, two miles, five and six miles distant in the forest, saw-mills buzzed away, strangely noisy amid their silent clumsy lumbermen and mill folk.

One after another, all those diverse persons necessary for carrying on the work of a small community drifted in. They cut themselves loose from other communities and hastened hither to help make this new one, each moved by his own particular reason, each bringing to the making of a Life the threads of his own deep desire. The threads interlaced with other threads, twisted into strands, knotted with other strands and the Life formed itself and hung trembling, thick and powerful, over the town.

The mill owners and managers came first, bringing strong warp threads for the Life. They had to have the town to take out their products and bring in supplies. They wanted to make money as fast as possible. "Let the town go to hell!" they said. They cared little how the Life went so that it did go. Most of them lived alternately as heads of families at home two hundred miles away and as bachelors at their mills and extract works.

Mr Stillman, owner of hundreds of acres of forest, was different. He wanted to be near at hand to watch his timber being taken out slowly and carefully and meanwhile to bring up his two small sons, healthy and virtuous, far away from city influences. He made a small farm up in the high south-west segment of the town against the woods, with orchards and sheep pasture and beehives and a big white farm-house, solidly built. He became a deacon in the Presbyterian church and one of the corner-stones of the town.

Mr Goff, owner of mills six miles out, kept up a comfortable place in town to serve as a half-way house between his mills and his home in a city a couple of hundred miles distant. He believed that his appearance as a regular townsman had a steadying influence on his workmen, that it gave them faith in him. His placid middle-aged wife accompanied him back and forth on his weekly visits to the mills and interested herself in those of his workers who had families.

Mill Manager Henderson snapped at the chance to run the Company store as well as to manage several mills. He saw in it something besides food and clothing for his large family of

red-haired girls. Although he lived down at one of the mills, he was counted as a townsman. He was a pillar in the Methodist church and his eldest daughter played the piano there.

George Brainerd, pudgy chief clerk of the Company store, was hand in glove with Henderson. He loved giving all his energies, undistracted by family or other ties, to the task of making the Company's workers come out at the end of the season in the Company's debt instead of having cleared a few hundred dollars as they were made to believe, on the day they were hired, would be the case. The percentage he received for his cleverness was nothing to him in comparison with the satisfaction he felt in his ability to manipulate.

Lanky Jim Dunn, the station agent, thirty-three and unmarried, satisfied his hunger for new places by coming to Five Points. He hated old settled lines of conduct. As station agent, he had a hand in everything and on every one that came in and went out of the town. He held a sort of gauge on the Life of the town. He chaffed all the girls who came down to see the evening train come in and tipped off the young men as to what was doing at the town hotel.

Dr Smelter, thin-lipped and cold-eyed, elegant in manner and in dress, left his former practice without regret. He opened his office in Five Points hoping that in a new community obscure diseases did not flourish. He was certain that lack of skill would not be as apparent there as in a well-established village.

Rev. Trotman had been lured hither by the anticipation of a virgin field for saving souls; Rev. Little, because he dared not let any of his own fold be exposed to the pitfalls of an opposing creed.

Dave Fellows left off setting chain pumps in Gurnersville and renewed his teaching experience by coming to Five Points to be principal of the school. Dick Shelton's wife dragged her large brood of little girls and her drunken husband along after the Fellows in order to be sure of some one to bring Dick home from the saloon before he drank up the last penny. It made little difference to her where she earned the family living by washing.

So they came, one after another, and filled up the town—Abe Cohen, the Jew clothing dealer, Barringer, the druggist, Dr Barton, rival of Dr Smelter and a far more highly skilled practioner, Jake O'Flaherty, the saloon-keeper, Widow Stokes, rag carpet weaver and gossip, Jeremy Whitling, town carpenter, and his golden-blond daughter Lucy, school teacher, Dr Sohmer, dentist. Every small



community needs these various souls. No sooner is the earth scraped clean for a new village than they come, one by one, until the town is complete. So it happened in Five Points until there came to be somewhat fewer than a thousand souls. There the town stood.

Stores and offices completely took up the circle of Main Street and straggled a little down the residence streets. Under the fringe of trees business hummed where side by side flourished Grimes' meat shop, the drug store with the dentist's office above, Henderson's General Store, as the Company store was called, Brinker's grocery store, the Clothing Emporium, McGilroy's barber shop, Backus' hardware, and the post office. The Five Points Argus issued weekly its two pages from the dingy office behind the drug store. Graham's Livery did a big business down near the station.

Each church had gathered its own rightful members within its round of Sunday and mid-week services, its special observances on Christmas, and Easter, and Children's Day. In the spring of each year a one-ring circus encamped for a day on the common ground in the centre of the town and drew all the people in orderly array under its tent. On the Fourth of July the whole town again came together in the centre common, in fashion less orderly, irrespective of creed or money worth, celebrating the deeds of their ancestors by drinking lemonade and setting off firecrackers.

After a while no one could remember when it had been any different. Those who came to town as little children grew into gawky youths knowing no more about other parts of the world than their geography books told them. When any one died, a strand in the Life hanging above the town broke and flapped in the wind, growing more and more frayed with the passing of time, until after a year or so its tatters were noticeable only as a sort of roughness upon the pattern. When a child was born, a thin tentacle from the central mass of strands reached out and fastened itself upon him, dragging out his desire year by year until the strand was thick and strong and woven in securely among the old scaly ones.

The folk who lived at the mills had hardly anything to do with the Life of Five Points. They were merely the dynamo that kept the Life alive. They were busied down in the woods making the money for the men who made the town. They came to town only on Saturday nights. They bought a flannel shirt and provisions at the Company store, a bag of candy at Andy's for the women folk,



and a flask of whiskey at the bar in the town hotel and then went back to have their weekly orgy in their own familiar surroundings. They had little effect on the Life of the town. That was contained almost entirely within the five points where the road met the forest.

The Life of Five Points had one fearful enemy. Its home was in the black forest. Without any warning it was likely to break out upon the town, its long red tongues leaping out, striving to lick everything into its red gullet. It was a thirsty animal. If one gave it enough water, it went back into its lair. Five Points had only drilled wells in back yards. The nearest big stream was a mile away.

Twice already during the existence of the Life the enemy had started forth from its lair. The first time was not long after the town had started and the pattern of Life was hardly more than indicated in the loosely woven threads.

Down in the forest the people saw a long red tongue leaping. With brooms and staves they ran to meet it far from their dwellings, beating it with fury. As they felt the heat of its breath in their faces, they thought of ministers' words in past sermons. Young desires and aspirations long dormant began to throb into being. They prayed for safety. They promised to give up their sins. They determined to be hard on themselves in the performance of daily duties. The Life suspended above them untwisted its loosely gathered in strands, the strands shone with a golden light and entwined again in soft forms.

With death-dealing blows they laid the enemy black and broken about Grant's Mill, a mile away, and then went back to their homes telling each other how brave they had been. Pride swelled up their hearts. They boasted that they could take care of themselves. Old habits slipped back upon their aspirations and crushed them again into hidden corners. Life gathered up its loose-woven pattern of dull threads and hung trembling over the town.

Worsting the enemy brought the people more closely together. Suddenly they seemed to know each other for the first time. They made changes, entered into bonds, drew lines, and settled into their ways. Life grew quickly with its strands woven tightly together into a weaving that would be hard to unloose.

The mill managers made money. They saw to it that their mills buzzed away continually. They visited their homes regularly. Mr.

Stillman's farm flourished. His apple trees were bearing. The school children understood that they could always have apples for the asking. The Stillman boys did not go to school. They had a tutor. Their father whipped them soundly when they disobeyed him by going to play in the streets of the town with the other children.

Dave Fellows had finally persuaded Dick Shelton to take a Cure. Dick Shelton sober, it was discovered, was a man of culture and knew, into the bargain, all the points of the law. So he was made Justice of the Peace. His wife stopped taking in washing and spent her days trying to keep the children out of the front room where Dick tried his cases.

Dave Fellows himself gave up the principalship of the school, finding its meagre return insufficient to meet the needs of an increasing family. Yielding to the persuasion of Henderson, he became contractor for taking out timber at Trout Creek Mill. He counted on his two oldest sons to do men's work during the summer when school was not in session. Fellows moved his family into the very house in which Henderson had lived. Henderson explained that he had to live in town to be near a doctor for his ailing wife and sickly girls. The millmen told Dave Fellows that Henderson was afraid of them because they had threatened him if he kept on overcharging them at the Company store.

Abe Cohen did a thriving business in clothing. He had a long list of customers heavily in debt to him through the promise that they could pay whenever they got ready. He dunned them openly on the street so that they made a wide detour in order to avoid going past his store.

Dr Barton had established a reputation for kindness of heart as well as skill in practice that threatened his rival's good will. Helen Barton, the doctor's young daughter, perversely kept company with her father's rival. Every one felt sorry for the father but secretly admired Dr Smelter's diabolic tactics.

Long-forgotten was the enemy when it came the second time. On a dark night when Five Points lay heavy in its slumbers, it bore down upon the north side of the town. Some sensitive sleeper, troubled in his dreams, awoke to see the dreadful red tongues cutting across the darkness like crimson banners. His cries aroused the

town. All the fathers rushed out against the enemy. The mothers dressed their children and packed best things in valises ready to flee when there was no longer any hope.

For three days and three nights the enemy raged, leaping in to eat up one house, two houses, beaten back and back, creeping up in another place, beaten back again. The school boys took beaters and screamed at the enemy as they beat.

The older ones remembered the first coming of the enemy. They said, "It was a warning!" They prayed while fear shook their aching arms. The Life of the town writhed and gleams of colour came out of its writhings and a whiteness as if the red tongues were cleansing away impurities.

The mill managers brought their men to fight the enemy. "We mustn't let it go," they said. Mr Stillman had his two sons helping him. He talked to them while they fought the enemy together. He spoke of punishment for sin. His sons listened while the lust of fighting held their bodies.

Helen Barton knelt at her father's feet where he was fighting the enemy and swore she would never see Dr Smelter again. She knew he was a bad man and could never bring her happiness.

Lyda, eldest daughter in the Shelton family, gathered her little sisters about her, quieting their clamours while her mother wrung her hands and said over and over again, "To happen when your papa was getting on so nicely!" Lyda resolved that she would put all thoughts of marrying out of her head. She would have to stop keeping company with Ned Backus, the hardware man's son. It was not fair to keep company with a man you did not intend to marry. She would stay for ever with her mother and help care for the children so that her father would have a peaceful home life and not be tempted.

All about, wherever they were, people prayed. They prayed until there was nothing left in their hearts but prayer as there was nothing left in their bodies but a great tiredness.

Then a heavy rain came and the red tongues drank greedily until they were slaked and became little short red flickers of light on a soaked black ground. The enemy was conquered. One street of the town was gone.

People ran to the church and held thanksgiving services. A stillness brooded over the town. Life hardly moved; the strands hung

slack. Thanksgiving soon changed to revival. Services lasted a week. The ministers preached terrible sermons, burning with terrible words. "Repent before it is too late. Twice God has warned this town." People vowed vows and sang as they had never sung before the hymns in their church song-books. The strands of Life leapt and contorted themselves but they could not pull themselves apart.

The revival ended. Building began. In a few months a street of houses sprang up defiant in yellow newness. In and out of a pattern little changed from its old accustomed aspect Life pulsated in great waves over the heavy strands. In and out, up and down, it rushed, drawing threads tightly together, knotting them in fantastic knots that only the judgement day could undo.

Mr Stillman's sons were now young men. The younger was dying of heart trouble in a hospital in the city. The father had locked the elder in his room for two weeks on bread and water until he found out exactly what had happened between his son and the Barringer's hired girl. Guy Stillman, full-blooded, dark, and handsome, with high cheek bones like an Indian, declared vehemently that he would never marry the girl.

Dave Fellows had taken his sons out of school to help him the year round in the woods. Sixteen-year-old Lawrence had left home and gone to work in the town barber shop late afternoons and evenings in order to keep on at his work in the high school grades just established. He vowed he would never return home to be made into a lumber-jack. Dave's wife was trying to persuade him to leave Five Points and go to the city where her family lived. There the children could continue their schooling and Dave could get work more suited to his ability than lumbering seemed to be. Dave, too proud to admit that he had not the capacity for carrying on this work successfully, stubbornly refused to entertain any thought of leaving the place. "If my family would stick by me, everything would come out all right," he always said.

Lyda Shelton still kept company with Ned Backus. When he begged her to marry him, she put him off another year until the children were a little better able to care for themselves. Her next youngest sister had married a dentist from another town and had not asked her mother to the wedding. Lyda was trying to make it up to her mother in double devotion.

Helen Barton met Dr Smelter once too often and her father made her marry him. She had a child born dead. Now she was holding clandestine meetings with Mr Daly, a traveling salesman, home on one of his quarterly visits to his family. He had promised to take Helen away with him on his next trip and make a home for her in the city.

It was a sweltering hot Saturday in the first part of June. Every now and then the wind blew in from the east picking up the dust in eddies. Abe Cohen's store was closed. His children wandered up and down the street, celebrating their sabbath in best clothes and chastened behaviour. Jim Dunn was watching a large consignment of goods for the Company store being unloaded. He was telling Earl Henderson, the manager's nephew, how much it would cost him to get in with the poker crowd.

George Brainerd had finished fixing up the Company's accounts. He whistled as he worked. Dave Fellows was in debt three hundred dollars to the Company. That would keep him another year. He was a good workman, but a poor manager. Sam Kent was in debt one hundred dollars. He would have to stay, too. John Simpson had come out even. He could go if he wanted to. He was a trouble-maker anyway. . . .

Helen Barton sat talking with Daly in the thick woods up back of the Presbyterian church. They were planning how to get away undetected on the evening train. . . . "If she was good enough for you then, she's good enough now," Mr. Stillman was saying to his defiant son. "You're not fit for a better woman. You'll take care of her and that's the end of it. . . ."

Widow Stokes' half-witted son rode up from the Extract Works on an old bony horse. He brought word that the enemy was at the Kibbard Mill, two miles beyond the Works. People were throwing their furniture into the mill pond, he said. Every one laughed. Mottie Stokes was always telling big stories. The boy, puzzled, went round and round the town, stopping every one he met, telling his tale. Sweat poured down his pale face.

At last he rode down to Trout Creek Mill and told Dave Fellows. Dave got on the old grey mule and came up to town to find out further news. The townsfolk, loafing under the trees around Main Street and going about on little errands, shouted when they

saw Dave come in on his mule beside Mottie on the bony horse. "Two of a kind," was passed round the circle of business and gossip, and sniggering went with it. Dave suggested that some one go down to see just what had happened. Jeers answered him. "Believe a fool? Not quite that cracked yet!" Dave went about uneasily if he had business to attend to, but keeping an eye searching out in the direction of the Works.

In an hour or so another rider came panting into town. Back of him straggled families from the mills and works with whatever belongings they could bring on their backs. Fear came into the hearts of the citizens of Five Points. They shouted in anger to drive away their fear. "Why didn't you stay and fight it? What'd you come up here for?"

"Too big, too big," cried the lumber folk, gesturing back over their shoulders.

Far off a haze was gathering and in the haze a redness appeared, growing slowly more and more distinct. The townsfolk stared in the direction of the Works, unwilling to believe. Some one shouted, "Better be ready!" Shortly every pump in the town had its hand and everything that could hold water was being filled for the oncoming thirsty beast.

Dave Fellows galloped down the long hills around curves across the bridge at the mill and up again to his home, told his family of the approach of the enemy, directed them to pack up all the easily moved furniture, harness the two mules and be ready to flee out through the forest past Goff's Mills to the next station thirty miles further down the railroad. No one could tell where the enemy would spread. He would come back the minute that all hope was lost. The boys must stay at home and take care of the place. "Bring Lawrence back with you," his wife called after him, and he turned and waved his hand.

When he got back into town thousands of red tongues were bearing down upon the station street. The enemy belched forth great hot breaths that swept the sky ahead of it like giant firecrackers and falling upon the houses to the east of the town ran from one to another eating its way up the station street towards the centre of the town. Family after family left their homes, carrying valuables, dragging their small children, and scattered to the north and south of the advancing enemy. The town hotel emptied itself quickly



of its temporary family. Jim Dunn left the station carrying the cash box and a bundle of papers.

From building to building the enemy leaped. Before it fled group after group of persons from stores and homes. Methodically it went round the circle of shops, the most rapacious customer the town had ever seen. Quarters of beeves in the meat shop, bottles of liquids and powders on the drug-store shelves, barrels and boxes of food in the grocery store, suits of clothing in Abe Cohen's, the leather whips and carriage robes in the hardware store, all went down its gullet with the most amazing ease.

Swelled with its indiscriminate meal, it started hesitantly on its way up the street that led to the Presbyterian Church. Now people lost their heads and ran hither and thither, screaming and praying incoherently, dragging their crying children about from one place to another, pumping water frantically to offer it, an impotent libation to an insatiable god. They knew that neither the beating of brooms nor the water from their wells could quench the enemy that was upon them. Red Judgement Day was at hand.

Meanwhile a peculiar thing happened. The Life that was hanging above the town lifted itself up, high up, entire in its pattern, beyond the reach of red tongues, of gusts from hot gullets—and there it stayed while the enemy raged below.

Dave Fellows harangued the men who were beating away vainly, pouring buckets of water on unquenchable tongues. He pointed to the forest up the street back of the Presbyterian church. He was telling them that the only thing to do was to call forth another enemy to come down and do battle with this one before it reached the church. "Yes, yes," they chorused eagerly.

Craftily they edged around south of the enemy, scorching their faces against its steaming flank, and ran swiftly far up the line of forest past the church. There it was even at that moment that Helen Barton was begging Daly to remember his promise and take her with him on the evening train. . . .

The men scooped up leaves and small twigs and bending over invoked their champion to come forth and do battle for them. Presently it came forth, shooting out little eager red tongues that danced and leaped, glad to be coming forth, growing larger in leaps and bounds. Dave Fellows watched anxiously the direction in which the hissing tongues sprang. "The wind will take it," he said at last.



Fitfully the breeze pressed up against the back of the newly born, pushing more and more strongly as the tongues sprang higher and higher, until finally it swept the full-grown monster down the track towards where the other monster was gorging.

"For God's sake, Henry, take me with you, this evening, as you promised," Helen was imploring Daly. "I can't stay here any longer. My father—I wish now I had listened to him in the first place, long ago." Daly did not hear her. He had risen to his feet and holding his head back was drawing in great acrid breaths. His florid face went white. "What is that?" he said hoarsely. Through the thick forest red tongues broke out, sweeping towards them. Helen clutched Daly's arm, screaming. He shook her off and turned to flee out by the church. There, too, red tongues were leaping, curling back on themselves in long derisive snarls. Daly turned upon her. "You . . ."

The two enemies met at the church, red tongue leaping against red tongue, crackling jaws breaking on crackling jaws, sizzling gullet straining against sizzling gullet. A great noise like the rending of a thousand fibres, a clap of red thunder, as the body of beast met the body of beast, and both lay crumpled upon the ground together, their long bodies writhing, bruised, red jaws snapping, red tongue eating red tongue.

Upon them leaped the band of men spreading out the whole length of the bodies and beat, beat, incessantly, desperately, tongue after tongue, hour after hour, beat, beat. Lingeringly the enemy died, a hard death. Three days it was dying and it had watchers in plenty. Whenever a red tongue leaped into life, some one was there to lay it low. In the night-time the men watched, and in the day the women and girls. The men talked. "We will build it up again in brick," they said. "That is safer and it looks better, too." The women talked, too. "I hope Abe will get in some of those new lace curtains," they said.

Meanwhile families gathered themselves together. Those whose homes were gone encamped picnic fashion in the schoolhouse or were taken in by those whose houses were still standing. Two persons were missing when the muster of the town was finally taken. They were Helen Barton and Mr Daly. Jim Dunn said he wasn't sure but he thought Daly left on the morning train. Daly's wife said he told her he was not going until evening.

They searched for Helen far and wide. No trace of her was ever found. Her father stood in front of the Sunday School on the Sunday following the death of the enemy and made an eloquent appeal for better life in the town. "The wages of sin is death," he declared, "death of the soul always, death of the body sometimes." The people thought him inspired. Widow Stokes whispered to her neighbour, "It's his daughter he's thinking of."

Dave Fellows was the only person who left the town. He went back to his wife when he saw that the town was saved and said, "We might as well move now that we're packed up. The town is cursed." Two days later they took the train north from a pile of blackened timbers where the old station had stood. Lawrence went with them.

The enemy had eaten up all the records in the Company store, and had tried to eat up George Brainerd while he was attempting to save them. The Company had to accept the workers' own accounts. George was going about with his arm tied up, planning to keep a duplicate set of records in a place unassailable by the enemy.

Abe Cohen wailed so about his losses and his little children that Mr Stillman set him up in a brand new stock of clothing. Abe was telling every one, "Buy now. Pay when you like." And customers came as of old.

Guy Stillman married the Barringers' hired girl. His father established them in a little home out at the edge of the town. The nearest neighbour reported that Guy beat his wife.

Lyda married Ned Backus. "Suppose you had died," she told Ned. "I would never have forgiven myself. You can work in papa's new grocery store. He's going to start one as soon as we can get the building done. Mama will have a son to help take care of her."

Life, its strands blackened by the strong breath of the enemy, settled down once more over the town and hung there, secure in its pattern, thick and powerful. Under it brick stores and buildings rose up and people stood about talking, complacently planning their days. "It won't come again for a long time," they said.

## THUS TO REVISIT . . .

BY FORD MADDOX HUEFFER

### V

#### COMBIEN JE REGRETTE . . .

After a great many years of this studious seclusion, I emerged for a time into the great world of English letters. This world was beginning again to re-conquer a little of a moonlight glory—a Parnassian opulence. When I look again at the list provided for me by my taskmaster, I perceive the names of four eminent men who were not already eminent at the close of the first decade of this century. Let me just repeat the list to save the reader the trouble of turning back: (Messrs)

"Gosse	Bennett
Hudson (W. H.)	Wells
Doughty	Sinclair (Miss)
Bridges	Lawrence (D. H.)
Hardy	Wyndham Lewis, 'etc., etc.'
Yeats	Meynell (Mrs)
Symons	Moore
Eliot	Dunsany (Lord)
Henry Newbolt (Sir)"	

and, the reader will remember, Rudyard Kipling and any of *Les Jeunes* that I liked. . . . Alas, I liked them all!

If we add then the names of George Meredith and of Henry James who were still alive and that of Mr Conrad and omit those of Mr T. S. Eliot, Mr D. H. Lawrence, and Mr Wyndham Lewis 'etc., etc.' who had not yet begun to write, we shall have a fair view of those who, in the moonlight, occupied thrones, or at least seats on the steps of England's Parnassus during the years 1907-8-9. It makes, this list, a distinguished and varied array, and Heaven forbid that one should presume to criticize its individual members. It wants just one thing—cohesion.

You can't imagine its units writing for any purpose under the sun—except perhaps to proclaim the immorality of conscious literary art. And, even to that, there would be one or two dissentients. I, on the other hand, can't imagine a literature without, behind it, some cohesion of writers. Writing—the poor old *métier de chien*—is such a solitary business; without some sort of contagion to sustain belief in himself a writer can do so little. And the usual contagion supplied to the eminent English writer, sitting solitary on his own little hill—the contagion supplied by his cook, bottle-washer, solicitor, and several female friends is a poor substitute for the sharpening of wits that will take place when many rivals meet habitually together and talk about how to write books. The poor dear old Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the great Flaubert-Turgenev-Zola-Maupassant group, the "Henley Gang" as it called itself, the Yellow-Book association—each of these movements did something towards providing a solution for one or other of the problems of literature, even if it did no more than prove that generosity is not impossible even to the writer.

In the lightness of our hearts Arthur Pearson Marwood—alas, that I should have to write, the late—and myself set out in one of the three years I have mentioned to afford a nucleus for some sort of movement. I have really forgotten what the year was—and it does not matter. We aimed at founding a sort of *aube de siècle* Yellow Book. We did—or perhaps we didn't . . .

At any rate, when I look again through the list of names provided for me by my taskmaster—with the additions of those of Henry James, George Meredith, Mr Conrad, President Taft, Anatole France, Gerhard Hauptmann, and Pope Pius X—I perceive those of only four gentlemen who did not write for us and, of these four, Mr Kipling was omitted only because he was too expensive. The other three we did not like.

Yet, of all the writers who contributed to our first three or four numbers there was only one—and his name I have left out on purpose!—who did not write to us to say that the English Review was ruined by the inclusion of every other contributor! Mr James said: "Poor dear old Meredith: God alone knows what he means!" Mr Meredith said: "Poor James in ageing! He has these mysterious internal rumblings. . . . But what do they mean?" The over-familiar literary friend of Marwood and

myself wrote a serious letter of remonstrance—a full dress letter—pointing out that we were “ruining our careers” by having “anything to do with” Mr Hudson, Mr Hardy, Mr Yeats, Mr Wells, Mr Bennett . . . *cela vous donne une fière idée de l’homme!*

And, really, it was a mad idea that we had, that of cementing together the immortals. “The bricks are alive to this day to testify: therefore deny it not.” We fell back upon *Les Jeunes* and, in the end *Les Jeunes* made a very pretty movment for themselves, only the war cut it short. *Les Jeunes*, as they presented themselves to us in those days, appeared successively as: (I am taking the names, as far as I can remember, chronologically) Mr Pound, Mr D. H. Lawrence, Wyndham Lewis, ‘etc., etc.’, Mr Flint, “H. D.,” Mr T. S. Eliot . . . I daresay I am forgetting somebody: he or she will perhaps forgive me!

I wish to be allowed to break off once again to pay a tribute to the memory of the late Arthur Marwood. He was not a writer but, large, fair, rather clumsy and gentle, he had the largest and wisest intelligence of any man that I have ever met. He had the largest general, he had the largest encyclopaedic knowledge that, I imagine, it would be possible for any one man’s skull to contain. He could discourse—and accurately—about the rigging of American fruit-schooners, about the rotation of crops on sandy soils, about the home life of Amerianus Marcellinus, the hidden aims of Mr Chamberlain, the rapture of Higher Mathematics, the phonetic syzygy of Anosto, or how to patch up a leaky roof. . . . Why he ever had anything to do with the English Review I cannot imagine! For he appeared to have no personal ambitions, being, if he was anything, a Yorkshire Tory Squire and the Fellow of some Cambridge College—Trinity, I think . . . What he was doing—what he can ever have expected to do—in that enterprise only Destiny, merciless, blind, and avenging could now say. He had no ambition to appear like Maecenas: he had no ambition at all. And, if the enterprise did not ruin him—as it certainly ruined me—it certainly inconvenienced him and caused him to endure a considerable amount of mental uneasiness and public odium. . . .

Its only outcome, as a movement-producer, was the group which, from 1910 until 1914 figured as *Les Jeunes* of London literary life. We printed the “first efforts” of Mr Pound, Mr Wyndham

Lewis, Mr D. H. Lawrence—and I daresay we printed those of other Futurists, Vorticists, Imagists. . . . At any rate in our editorial *salons* they found chairs and sofas on which to recline whilst they settled the fate of already fermenting Europe, and certainly we should have printed them all, if we had been able to keep on. So for three or four years, culminating in the London season of 1914, they made a great deal of noise in a city that was preparing to reverberate with greater echoes. They found their earthly home and general headquarters in a cabaret beneath the New Gallery. There, to the sound of prophetically African music they plotted blowing Parnassus to the moon. They came near to doing it. They stood for the non-representational in art; for *vers libre*; for *tapage* in prose and for death to impressionism. They were a fine band and did useful work. The war is said to have extinguished them. I wonder if it has.

We now skip five years during which the moon did not shine—or at any rate the denizens of our Parnassus, I understand, used to pray that it would not.

## VI

I write this section—in which I at last come to revisiting—with great diffidence. I should not write it at all if I had not been “put right” by a young man already eminent in the world of letters. I could have deduced the conditions of which he dogmatically informs me, as a zoologist deduces the Ichthyosaurus from the long deceased beast’s little toe-joint. In short, according to my confident informant, himself Parnassian of the Parnassians, Academism is now triumphant in these Islands as it never was before. To secure so much as publication you must bow to some image or other of Minerva, subscribe to some Fifty Articles, and kiss some one’s great toe. Mr Pound, I am told, is dead; Mr Wyndham Lewis, I think, is amongst the Immortals of Birmingham House; Futurism is a bye-word; *vers libre* has been put into a decasyllabic strait-waist-coat: all the Imagists are in the workhouse. . . . I wonder what has become of Impressionism. The Futurists killed that, so they used to say, at the same time telling me, negligently, that I was an Impressionist, if not the father of Impressionism in these Islands. . . .



There would be nothing sad about all this if it were not that the young have become Academic. That is the tragic aftermath of the war. For to the war went all that was *tapageur* of the youth of the country: to the war went the Futurists, the Imagistes, the Vorticists, the Vers Librists—even the poor old Impressionists. The Eminent Middle Aged remained in undisturbed possession of the *fauteuils* of Parnassus, the steps of the fane were—and according to my informant still are—occupied by a serried phalanx of metricists, prosodists, bibliophiles, annalists, commentators; all the C's III and the C. O.'s of the nation's young. That is inevitable; it was so in Athens in the old days; so it will be for ever. But I hope some public-spirited man will arise to give the Real Young a chance. For apart from the censorship established by the Neo-Academics (I am so dogmatically assured of its existence by one claiming to be on the Board—that I must believe in its existence!) apart, then, from that, the mere economics of to-day make it extremely difficult for a young writer even to get his first book printed. Paper is very expensive, printing is very expensive, binding is very expensive. Initiative on the part of publishers is almost prohibited for the moment. I don't know that we ought to blame them: perhaps we ought—but I am not minded to throw the first stone. We have to blame first the indifference of the public, the want of conscience on the part of the reviewers—and, apparently, my young friend's censorship. If these three would mend their ways, the publishers would soon dance to their tune.

Reaction, then, towards Academicism is normal to all ages and to most countries. That is decreed by blind and august Destiny: I can't see why it is decreed, though I understand how it happens. The reader will know: he was once young and *tapageur*: his waist has grown or is in process of growing: he needs a nice country house: so he seeks to drive all the younger cockerels off his dunghill. It is, in short, decreed that we should grow old and wear our laurel with a difference. . . . The young usually have a fair chance to dig our graves.

To-day they have none—and that is a very serious affair. It is a serious affair for the Republic. We, as a nation, are too inclined to be commercial—and a nation that becomes over-commercialized is a nation destined either to decay or obliteration. The politics of Parnassus are not merely domestic wrangles. Stodginess and Aca-



demicism at the fount of intellect means tenfold materialism in the race that is content to endure them. A movement—any movement—leavens a whole nation with astonishing rapidity: its ideas pour through the daily press with the rapidity of water pouring downwards through interstices. A solitary thinker may take an aeon to make his voice heard: seven working in concert will forty-nine times shorten the process of induration. And movements make for friendships, enthusiasms, self-sacrifice, mutual aid—all fine things: and movements are things of youth . . . .

I should like to be permitted to write with some emotion of these matters since they are those that I felt most deeply all my life. But I am aware that emotionalism is inadvisable. Let us then take a guarded view of where we stand. I fancy when he said that Mr Pound was dead, Mr Lewis an R. A., Mr T. S. Eliot a Wall Street operator and Mr Lawrence a whole-time librarian—when in short he reported that the whole batalion of *Les Jeunes* of 1914 had been wiped out, my young Academic friend was reporting rather what he wished than what he knew to be the case. That is what censorships will do. It is what they are for: thus they encourage recruiting! So we may take it that those gentlemen are alive still. There are also Mr Flint and "H. D." of the original Imagists. It is not a great showing—but it gives you a nucleus of people who can be trusted to be decent to the young. There is also Mr James Joyce and there is Miss Richardson.

I am inclined to think that Mr Joyce is riding a method to death—but I do not profess to be sure. And at any rate it is a good thing to ride a method to death, for it lets one see of what it is capable: and nothing is more useful to the Arts than to be afforded an object lesson of how far a method can be made go. In a sense Mr Joyce descends from Henry James in his perception of minute embarrassments and related frames of mind and he has carried Mr Conrad's early researches after ramified form almost as far as they can go. But he is direct in his relation of incident. This Miss Richardson isn't; she records incident so much through the medium of emotion, and so minutely, that at times one has a difficulty in following her. But then one is tired.

Women, indeed, who seem to be indefatigable, have assumed a large share of responsibility for the carrying forward of the Arts whilst their men-folk were absent at Thermopylae—or was it Can-

nae?—I am aware, even in my remoteness—indeed in a remoteness still greater from the glimpses of the moon, I was aware of Miss Clemence Dane who has worked out a great deal of the method of Mr James; of Mrs Virginia Woolf who seems to be making a formidable attempt to revive the Standard Type of English Novel; of Miss G. P. Stern who analyses modern trends of thought and of feminism. And I should like to put in a special plea for Miss, or Mrs, George Stevenson whose book *Benjy*, in a rather down-to-the-ground style such as Mr Garnett tried to make popular in the nineties, I have enjoyed as one used to enjoy books in one's childhood. I have read it over and over again.

So that then, firmly in the saddle, we have representatives of the four types of nineteenth century schools such as you found in the early nineties: Mrs Woolf to represent the lingering tradition of George Eliot; Miss Dane to speak for the Master; George Stevenson to illuminate the workings of Mr Garnett, and Miss Stern to unite most of the qualities of the non-Jamesian Yellow Book. They carry on, then, these ladies, fine traditions, but I doubt if any of them would really join revolts, or attacks, on the Parnassian steps. And that, alone, really interests me.

I can't help it. I wish my nature would let me compose myself to sit beside Mr Gosse, Sir Sidney Colvin, the editors of the more Academic Reviews (the Academic Young who have established claims to these mantles)—and the eminent bibliophiles, commentators, and *Vorschungen-wallahs*. But it will not: I have had several manuscripts sent to me lately by young people who cannot find publishers. That is hateful.

And so we come back to the plea with which I started this paper. I wish that some public-spirited man could be found to throw away a couple of thousand pounds on the young—to be ready just to lose that amount in order to promote a movement. Any movement. A dead loss of a couple of thousand pounds may represent an amazing stretch of activities, just as a profit of a couple of thousand pounds may be all that results from a trade-turnover of millions.

And I ask the reader to observe that I am not seeking to promote the interests of any one school. I am not even asking any one to give Mr Lewis, Mr Flint, or Captain Read what is called in military parlance a "sporting chance" to make up the ground that they lost by their periods of army service. I simply want to point out

that the healthy young are wise with a queer, instinctive wisdom. They are no doubt also foolish; they need handicapping.

But to-day the handicaps against them are unjust. The economics of paper and print are against them: the Academics are unduly strong against them; they lost too many of all ranks and their nerves suffered too much in the fields of France and of Flanders. . . .

But I am letting emotion come creeping in. . . .

## YOUTH

BY HAZEL HALL

Perhaps his feet might choose in their new pride  
A tread whose echoes ring more evenly—  
But Life, a friendly hound, runs at his side  
And will not let him be.

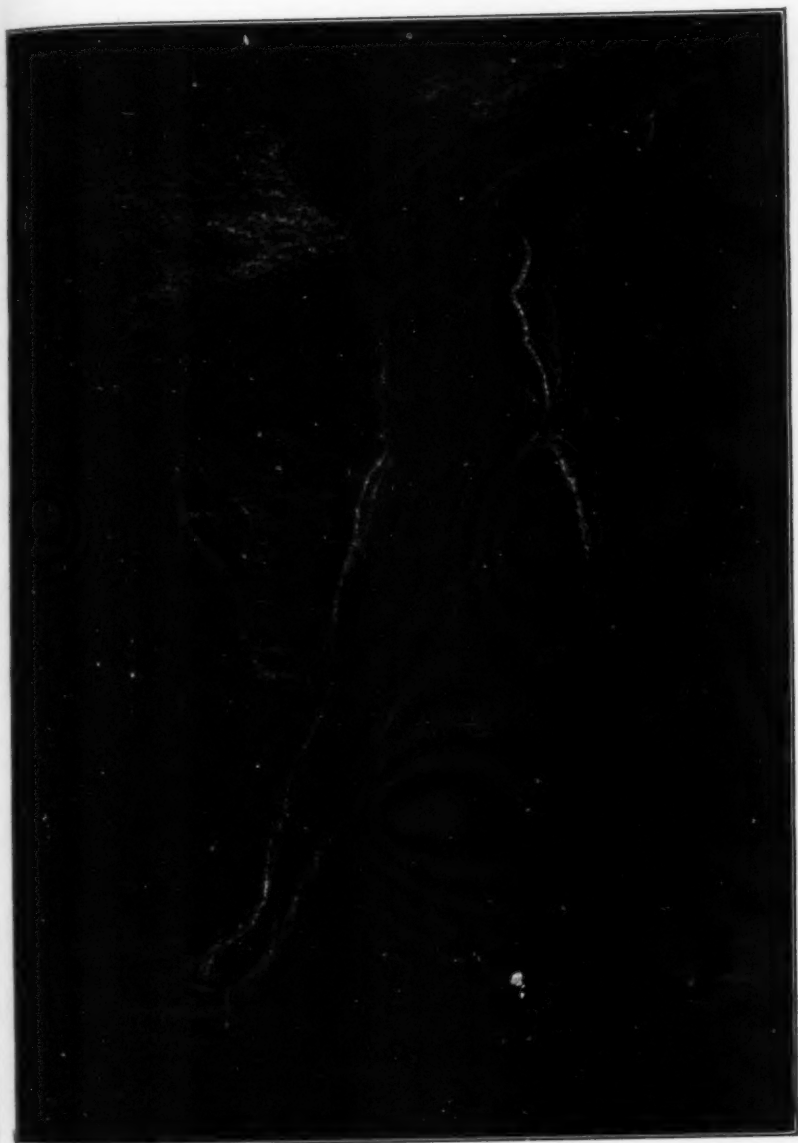
His spirits answer in good comradeship;  
Yet he must have a care to face the street  
Erect, lest this strange dignity should slip  
Like sandals from his feet.

And in the awkward grace of his new gait,  
His show of artlessness, becoming wise,  
The past and future gravely arbitrate—  
And gayly compromise.

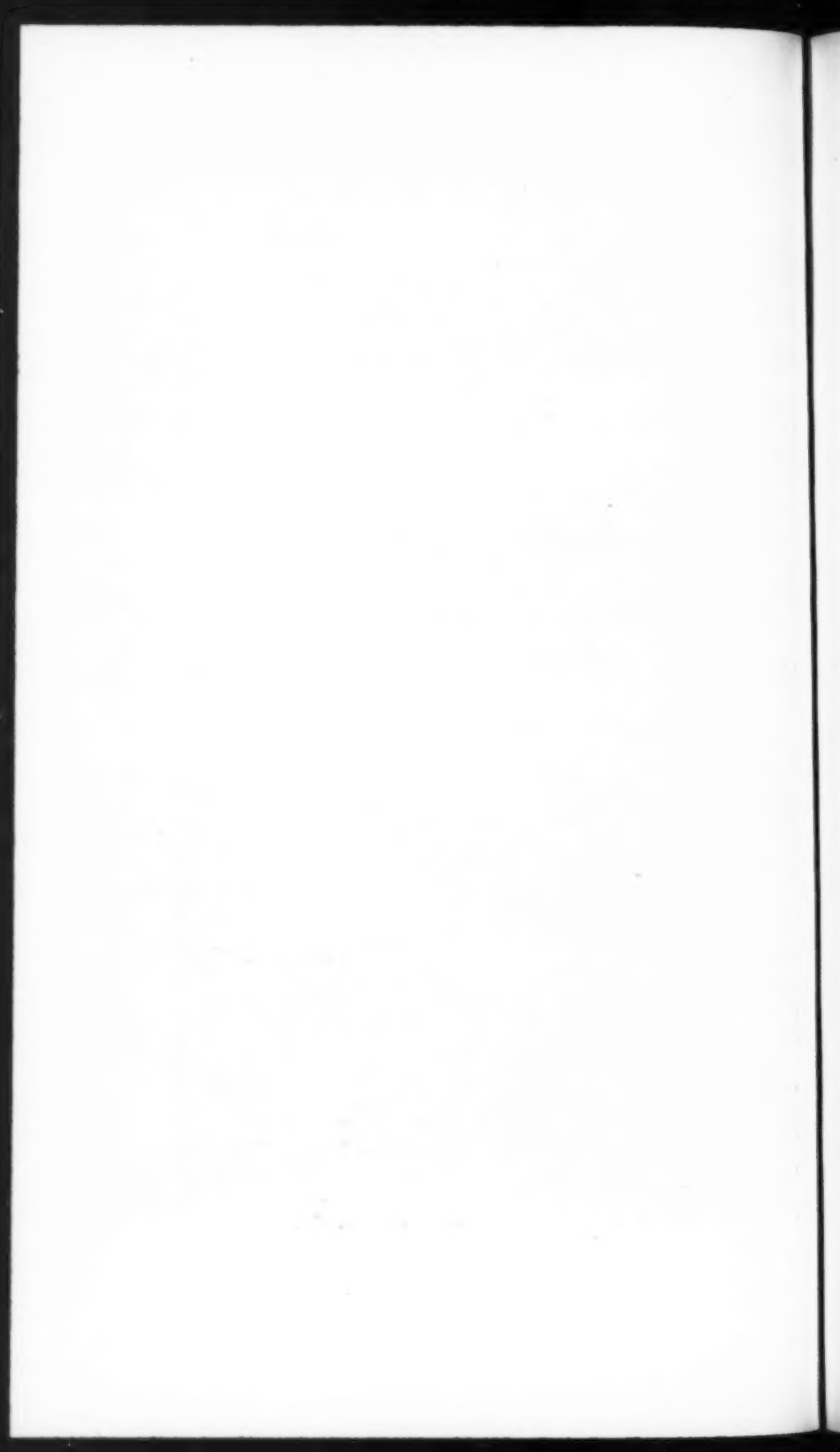
So on he goes with sure, uncertain stride,  
Holding with valiant grip his dignity—  
But Life, a friendly hound, runs at his side  
And will not let him be.

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AFTER SEEING ISADORA DUNCAN. BY VAN DEERING PERRINE





*Courtesy of H. T. Lindeberg*

THE SPIRAL GIRL. BY VAN DEERING PERRINE

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## SONGS OF THE PUEBLO INDIANS

BY AMY LOWELL

### WOMEN'S HARVEST SONG

I am waving a ripe sunflower,  
I am scattering sunflower pollen to the four world-quarters.  
I am joyful because of my melons,  
I am joyful because of my beans,  
I am joyful because of my squashes.

The sunflower waves.  
So did the corn wave  
When the wind blew against it,  
So did my white corn bend  
When the red lightning descended upon it,  
It trembled as the sunflower  
When the rain beat down its leaves.

Great is a ripe sunflower,  
And great was the sun above my corn-fields.  
His fingers lifted up the corn-ears,  
His hands fashioned my melons,  
And set my beans full in the pods.  
Therefore my heart is happy  
And I will lay many blue prayer-sticks at the shrine of Ta-wa.

I will give corn to Ta-wa,  
Yellow corn, blue corn, black corn.  
I wave the sunflower,  
The sunflower heavy with pollen.  
I wave it,  
I turn it,  
I sing,  
Because I am happy.

## BASKET DANCE

Dance!

Dance!

The priest is yellow with sunflower meal,

He is yellow with corn-meal,

He is yellow as the sun.

Dance!

Dance!

His little bells are ringing,

The bells tinkle like sunlight,

The sun is rising.

Dance!

Dance!

Perhaps I will throw you a basket,

Perhaps I will throw you my heart.

Lift the baskets, dancing,

Lower the baskets, dancing,

We have raised fruits,

Now we dance.

Our shadows are long,

The sunlight is bright between our shadows.

Do you want my basket?

Catch it!

Catch it!

But you cannot catch me,

I am more difficult.

## WOMEN'S SONG OF THE CORN

How beautiful are the corn rows,

Stretching to the morning sun,

Stretching to the evening sun.

Very beautiful, the long rows of corn.

How beautiful is the white corn,  
I husk it,  
I grind it.  
Very beautiful, my white corn.

How beautiful is the red corn,  
I gather it and make fine meal,  
I am glad doing this.  
Very beautiful, my red corn.

How beautiful is the black corn,  
I give it to my father,  
To my mother,  
I give it to my child.  
Very beautiful, the black corn.

How beautiful is the mottled corn,  
Like the sky with little clouds,  
I eat it looking at the sky.  
Very beautiful, my mottled corn.

#### PRAYER FOR A PROFUSION OF SUNFLOWERS

Send sunflowers!  
With my turkey-bone whistle  
I am calling the birds  
To sing upon the sunflowers.  
For when the clouds hear them singing  
They will come quickly,  
And rain will fall upon our fields.  
Send sunflowers!

## PRAYER FOR LIGHTNING

My corn is green with red tassels,  
I am praying to the lightning to ripen my corn,  
I am praying to the thunder which carries the lightning.  
Corn is sweet where lightning has fallen.  
I pray to the six-coloured clouds.

## FLUTE-PRIEST SONG FOR RAIN

*Ceremonial at the Sun Spring*

Whistle under the water,  
Make the water bubble to the tones of the flute.  
I call the bluebirds song into the water:  
Wee-kee! Wee-kee-kee!  
Dawn is coming,  
The morning star shines upon us.  
Bluebird singing to the West clouds,  
Bring the humming rain.

Water-rattles shake,  
Flute whistles,  
Star in Heaven shines.  
I blow the oriole's song,  
The yellow song of the North.  
I call rain clouds with my rattles:  
Wee-kee-kee, oriole.  
Pattering rain.

To the South I blow my whistle,  
To the red parrot of the South I call.  
Send red lightning,  
Under your wings  
The forked lightning.  
Thunder-rattles whirl

To the sky waters.  
Fill the springs.  
The water is moving.  
Wait—

Whistle to the East  
With a magpie voice.  
Wee-kee! Wee-kee-kee!  
Call the storm-clouds  
That they come rushing.  
Call the loud rain.

Why does it not come?  
Who is bad?  
Whose heart is evil?  
Who has done wickedness?  
I weep,  
I rend my garments,  
I grieve for the sin which is in this place.  
My flute sobs with the voice of all birds in the water.  
Even to the six directions I weep and despair.  
Come, O winds, from the sides of the sky,  
Open your bird-beaks that rain may fall down.  
Drench our fields, our houses,  
Fill the land  
With tumult of rain.

## BELPHEGOR

*Essay on the Aesthetic of Contemporary French Society*

BY JULIEN BENDA

IT appears to us that the aesthetic of contemporary French society—or more precisely, its aesthetic will or desire—can be summed up in one sentence:

*Modern French society requires of works of art that they make it experience emotions and sensations and no longer expects to realize from works of art any kind of intellectual pleasure.*

This desire in its nature is not peculiar to our time. Presided over from the beginning by women and young people, French society has always preferred in art that which caressed the senses and made the heart beat faster to that which touched the mind. The best received play of the *siècle de la raison* was *Timocrate* and the most popular novel was not *La Princesse de Clèves*. What is peculiar to our own time is the extraordinary perfection of this desire, its precision, its violence; it is the concentration—the science—brought to bear to satisfy this desire and to extend its province; it is universal, and its traces may be found in the most cultivated minds; peculiar above all is the fact that people are conscious of it, take pride in it, and build systems on it.

We propose now to describe the chief symptoms.

### DESIRE THAT ART SHOULD BE A MYSTIC UNION WITH THE ESSENCE OF THINGS

One of the most striking symptoms—the one from which most of the others are derived—is that doctrine which holds that art consists in a mystic union with the essence of things. We know that, according to a school which is extremely popular in our time, art must break with everything which is Idea, existence of things in the mind, and seize them in their own proper existence, must unite itself with their “vital principle,” with their “interior heart-beats”—this by an act of pure love, “sympathy,” “intuition”—in

which, by definition, all varieties of intellectual activity, concepts, symbols, habits of speech, founder. "Modern aesthetics," says one of its apostles (M. Tancrede de Visan in *l'Attitude du lyrisme contemporain*), "consists in grasping reality *apart from all expression, translation, or symbolic representation*"; its method is "*intuition*, a kind of central vision which becomes *the actual live and changing rhythm of things*"; intuition [the italics are the author's] "*does not reflect: it is action, heart, ego.*" "If the rose," says another, deriving his inspiration from a page of William James, "if the rose were nameless, it would still be the force of life and beauty which it is. To be one with this force while remaining unresponsive to its names or in a more general way to what the understanding tells us about it, that is the function of art." There, surely, is an activity which is strangely troubling and one which no society has ever before dreamed of demanding from the artist. The contemporaries of de Musset and Lamartine undoubtedly desired emotion in art above all other things; but they never expressly insisted upon it to the extinction of the understanding. That is a real step in progress.

We will not discuss this conception of an art which has the pretension of "dispensing with symbols"; we will not even mention how many writers were artists (Petrarch, Malherbe) without at all "uniting themselves with the soul of things"; nor that, if some of them did practise this union (M. Barrès, for example, in certain pages of *Grande Pitié des Eglises de France*) they were artists not by this state of being, but by the form which they gave it, that is, by the idea which they derived from it. Our intention is not to discuss the ideas of our contemporaries, but to distinguish the desires which are expressed in those ideas.

Let us carefully analyse the diverse cravings for sensation which this doctrine implies:

First, art must grasp things in their life-principle. That is, moreover, a reaction which our contemporaries demand of all the activities of the mind: philosophy, science (biology at least) must also, as we shall see, bring us in contact with the object "in its essence," in its "creative principle." Let us observe that in order to add emotional power, this doctrine is never allowed to be moderate; it is always "palpitating, burning, dynamic." The absolute to-day is no longer quietude, but agitation; the Eternal has be-



come Passion; more than ever before one can say, with the poet, of repose *Qu'on en faisait jadis le partage des dieux*.

Second, art must *unite* itself with life-principle, not observe or describe it, for these activities imply standing apart from it; art must unite with it, or more precisely, become fused with it, become confused with it. That is a formal article of the creed: "You have at last understood" says a modern thinker describing the state of soul which, according to our aesthetes, must stand as the true type of artistic activity, "that if your knowledge of the trajectory, traced by an object moving through space, is not a sufficient datum, it is because you are looking at it from the outside, instead of becoming one with the point which describes the trajectory and experiencing its movement." (Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*.)

Similarly, when our preceptors announce that art "must stop walking round the object, and must establish itself in its very heart"; that does not mean at all according to them that art must penetrate to the interior truth of things; quite the contrary. They mean that art must give up all kinds of observation, since so long as it observes it remains separate, and identify itself with the life of things.

Repeatedly we hear our prophets declare that the artist must "espouse the inner rhythm of things," "become the life of things," "live things." Let us mark well this curious desire which is of quite universal application, since they feel it in regard to the critic, the historian, and the philosopher as well, and which is so peculiar to our time as a conscious and formulated desire—an abolition of the distinction between the artist and his material, the dissolution of his personality in its soul, the extinction of all judgement, and of all transcendence on his part in his relation to it. Is it necessary to cite the quite specially relished emotion, the exquisite weakness, which this spectacle affords? Let us add that even apart from this fusion of the artist with his subject, the "adoption of the life of things" is in itself a strangely disquieting spectacle.

At the side of this emotion of gentle weakness at the thought of the artist swooning upon the soul of things, let us note also a strong emotion, caused by the spectacle of the glowing fusion of the soul of the artist with that of the object, as by the vision of a profound

embrace. Let us recognize also in their desire to be established in the core of things, the thirst for a sort of sexual invasion of things, a violation of their intimacy, a mingling with the deepest secrets of their being—a thirst which every one will admit has nothing to do with the search for an aesthetic emotion. To be sure the emotions we are analysing and separating here are not distinct in the souls of our aesthetes, where each gains strength by the presence of the others.

Third, art, in order to unite with the soul of things, must yield to a state of pure love where mental activity of every sort is in abeyance; in other terms, art must consist in a purely emotional state. We shall see among our contemporaries still other forms of this desire to know, in connection with products of the mind, that infinitely disquieting thing, a purely emotional state. Let us here testify to our admiration for the power, curious enough in men of the world, to form so clearly this exceedingly abstract conception of a purely emotional state, and their skill in denouncing intellectual activity in its most subtle aspects: symbols, images, representations, habits of speech. Hate makes for genius. (Note: "What is a symbol? A sign employed instead of a reality. Now, contemporary poets go direct to reality, to the living interior, and not to the appearances, not to the exterior representations of things." T. de Visan, cited above.)

Note well that this pure sentiment of things, exempt from all intellectual travail, is not, according to our aesthetes, a first essay of artistic activity, a necessary but purely preparatory state upon which the intelligence is presently to work like a demiurge; no—and this is the entire originality of the doctrine—it is the sum total of artistic activity; the artist does not become one with the souls of things the better to express them; he must become one with them and so remain; that is sufficient to earn him his title. Here is an explicit and much admired statement on this subject:

"There exists at least one class of these privileged persons," (who move in the sphere of "pure perception," that is, in the pure sentiment of things, unmixed with the intellect), "*they are the artists*. . . . Their sole preoccupation is to enlarge their perception, without trying to rise above it" (Bergson, *La Perception du Changement*). All the same, since they are compelled to realize that the artist does express his feeling, they have invented a

state in which the pure sentiment of things becomes, by its very nature, artistic expression, a state which allows "the poet to think his poem in a flash, to set himself in the interior of the object of his song, to such a point that the expression of his song is his very soul living in the moment of his consciousness." But let us note that in all this no demand is yet made on the intelligence: it is feeling which creates the expression of art and thus defrays all the cost of artistic activity.

This desire that sentiment alone suffice in art was, let us remark, a thing unknown to the early romanticists. Some of them, in fact, formally repudiated the idea: "I have had a soul" says Lamartine, "it is true; that is all. I have uttered some cries from my heart. But if the soul suffices for feeling, it does not suffice for expression."

Let us also note how this mystic communion with things is, according to our preceptors, essential to the artistic activity. It is not one source among many possible sources of art. It is the unique source. They admit reluctantly that a Gautier, painting Venice and Toledo objectively without "identifying himself with their heartbeats," without "straining them to his breast" may still be an artist. The belief that there can be no other art is so deep in their marrow that they never even warn one of the restriction implicit in all their treatises on aesthetics, in their *ars poetica*, in all their precepts—"fusion with the soul of things," "penetration into their mysteries," and so on, namely, that they apply exclusively to mystic art alone.

Finally let us note how stubbornly they insist upon calling this aphasiac union with the essence of things "art." Why at all cost this inappropriate name? Why not simply "a state of being," "love," "mystic union?" It is because the value of our words comes from an age which set the qualities of the mind at the very highest summit, and the name of art with its perfume of the intellect still remains the flattering word. The tragic thing about the modern barbarians is that they are still living under the verbal tyranny of the civilized.

This purely emotional conception of art is expressed, among our contemporaries, in many other forms which are worth recognizing and of which some will throw into particularly bold relief their frenzied hunger for emotion, their horror of the Idea.

First. Art must be an immediate perception of the object, suppressing all intermediaries, all "veils interposed" between ourselves and the world ("veils" are the forms of representation). In this aspect we touch upon the gluttonous appetite for the immediate which characterizes our moderns, this desire to absorb things themselves, a thirst which they try to quench not alone by art but by philosophy and science; philosophy, we know, must give them "a direct perception" of the world, an "immediate datum." It is most remarkable that they confer an order of superiority upon those who show themselves capable of such perception, as if the principal distinction of a creature in the scale of life were not precisely the faculty of replacing direct perception by indirect, from the animal which knows the temperature of water by dipping in his paw, to the man who knows it by looking at a numeral on a glass tube. Nor let us forget that for them "direct perception" of a thing does not mean a direct view of that thing, but suppression of all view in becoming identical with the thing itself.

Second. Art must present things in their reality, not in the distortions due to the intelligence (we know that they have just discovered how the intelligence deforms whatever it touches). This distortion by the intelligence is only another name for the human faculty of converting the world of the senses into an intelligible whole—and is precisely what was considered by society in the Seventeenth Century to be the chief honour of our race when it was revealed to them by Descartes. That, also, is a good measure of the progress made by French society. Moreover, it would be too comic to discover any love of the truth in this horror felt by our contemporaries for the distortion of things. Saint-Simon, too, "distorts whatever he touches." They know it and they venerate him for it. Because he distorts with his passion. What they reject is not the alteration of things but alteration wrought by the intelligence.

This is the place to note one of the most curious traits of this society: its hatred of the intellect. We have cited elsewhere the numerous forms in which this hatred is manifested: in the desire to identify the intellect with dry and unimaginative reason, the better to despise it; in the will to believe that the great discoveries are made by a function (the intuition) which "transcends" intelligence, in the disarray of the mind, beyond all logic, beyond the

faintest whispering of intellectualism; in the joy of noting what it considers the checkmating and the "failures" of science (instead of being grieved by them); in the desire to believe that the intelligence is linked only with our practical, utilitarian needs, with the physical, inferior; that it is adapted to—what am I saying?—that it is identical with the inert world, with matter, with the wastes of the universe, and so on. This violent, conscious, organized detestation of the intelligence—intellectual has almost become a term of contempt in our salons—constitutes an entirely new thing in French society. The men of 1830 knew naught of it; the romanticists of that day felt that they were writing for "an intelligent, logical, rational élite" (Hernani). The new attitude will be the distinguishing mark of our time in the history of French civilization.

Let us note, however, the care taken by these enemies of all intellectualism to declare that they are in arms only against intellectualism imperfectly conceived, against the lazy intellectualism of the pedant, and above all, that they represent "the true intellectualism." It is clear that even for its detractors, no matter what they say, intellectualism, at least the name of it, preserves a sort of shop-worn prestige. Even so the barbarian kings who came to destroy the civilization of Rome could think of no greater glory than to be named consuls.

Third. Art must seize the object in all its uniqueness. Let us distinguish two meanings in this commandment, and, as it were, successive degrees in the desire to feel. First they mean that art must create a form for each object (as science a category for each fact), must evoke only the particular (object of sensation) and forbid the type (object of thought). The ideal of our dilettanti in this respect is the language of the Hurons, in which the verb to eat varies as many times as there are things to eat; or that of the Iroquois in which there is one word for the tail of a dog, another for that of a sheep, another for that of an ox, but there is no word for the tail in general. And yet this is not quite a complete abolition of intellectual activity; an idea representing one single object is still an idea; a name, even if it is a proper name, is still a name. And the demand for the particular in art most often means that art must take the object outside of any mental articulation, in all it has "of unique and *inexpressible*" (See Bergson, LeRoy, and so on).



Fourth. Art must present the object *in its indecomposable totality*. Here also we distinguish two desires. First, the simple gluttonous desire for the Whole; second, the desire, again, to seize the object in its "life," in the feeling it has of its own existence, which is indivisible, and not in the diverse and analysable aspects which it has for the eyes of the observer from the outside. Nevertheless, in this last form, our aesthetes expressly avow their hatred of everything which springs from the *category of Number*, a hatred which has always been deep in the hearts of all the fanatics of emotion. Being conscious of it, however, is a new thing among men and women of the world.

As far as it is a gluttonous desire for the Whole it seems to have been felt with a quite special intensity by M. Claudel. According to one of his interpreters who speaks not disrespectfully of this trait, "Claudel wanted to know everything and to possess everything. Nature is a profundity and a totality, and this totality which he could not embrace haunted and tormented his spirit." Some impressive quotations follow. Alas, here is something to strike despair into the hearts of Claudel and his disciples. One of the ancients went even further in this desire; in a tragedy of Aeschylus of which only a few verses remain, he speaks of embracing Zeus, "who is the Whole and whatever exists beyond the Whole."

#### PROHIBITION OF CLEARNESS IN ART CULT OF THE INDISTINCT

Another trait, relating to the foregoing, which again marks the zeal of our people for experiencing sensations through art and rejecting all intellectual states, is their desire that art should ignore distinctions between things, clear-cut separations, definite contours, and should present things in their "vagueness," their "reciprocal penetration," in their "movement" and in their "fluidity." They are not unaware, indeed, that the perception of things as distinct is the very essence of intellectual activity; they are especially aware of it now since the *Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* states this as its thesis. Nor are they unaware that the lack of distinction, besides suppressing this detested activity,

creates a sensation of inquietude which is particularly precious. Let us note, finally, that the indistinct in modern aesthetics is not taken merely as a negation of the distinct, but for itself, as having a positive value. (See, for example, "the idea of Disorder" in *Creative Evolution*.)

Here, too, the desire we are noting is not new in its nature. In every age sensitive souls have felt the seduction of the indefinite, the ill-defined; long before this the art was loved which painted those moments when "It is no longer night, yet not quite day." And Hugo cherished Cellini for knowing how to make "A lily which becoming a woman remains a lily still."

What is new is that they will not have any other art, that they despise the art which is precise, that they have not merely a taste for the indistinct but make a religion of it, and this in the name of a system.

How do they propose to express the indistinct with words, images, all evocations of distinct things? By accumulating their expressions, instead of limiting themselves to those which are suitable, so that their number in some sort neutralizes the precision of each; by proceeding through "successive approximations," through "transpositions of art," through "perpetual suggestions," through "choosing images as disparate as possible," so as to "prevent any one of them from usurping the function of the intuition which they are intended to invoke" (T. de Visan). It may be said that if the ancients devoted themselves to correcting the vagueness of words, the moderns devote themselves to correcting their precision.

This prohibition of contours, this aesthetic of the indefinite, extends to a domain where it is particularly surprising, that of the plastic arts. To limit ourselves to painting, it means the proscription of the design of things, the effort to paint things in their "mutual imbrication," in their "eternal fusion," in their "perpetual instability." ("The gesture which we wish to reproduce on the canvas will no longer be a fixed moment seized from the universal dynamism; it will be simply the dynamic sensation itself. In fact, everything moves, everything runs, everything transforms itself, *et cetera*" —Futurist manifesto.) Moreover, the desire of the modern painter to reject every intellectual element is translated into another series of doctrines of which the intention, behind the many glosses given to it, can be summed up in a phrase: to evoke the im-



pression we get from things without the significance given to those impressions by our minds—the impressions, for example, we receive when, in the morning, we have just wakened and our intelligence has not yet correlated them, or the impressions we get when we are standing on our heads (in philosophical language, to substitute *sensation* for *perception*). We know that there exists at the same time a school of exactly the opposite doctrine: that of synthetic painting (cubism) in which abstraction to the utmost attempts to reduce the representation of objects to a few elementary forms, pure creations of the spirit. That is a special case of another sort of romanticism which we will observe later; it is the romanticism of the reason.

A still more extraordinary thing is the demand for vagueness in ideology. Criticism, science, even philosophy, are invited to shun frontiers and definitions, and to proceed by indefinite colours, by "shifting" categories, by "fluid concepts." Writers who are formally presented as thinkers (Rolland, Sorel, William James), are esteemed for the "mobility" of their words, for the "fluidity" of their teaching. A critic is praised for his care in preventing his thought from "becoming fixed in a definite mould" and for "announcing all affirmations at the same time." "Cursed be the day," cries an aesthete apropos of one of his idols, "cursed be the day when this mind becomes definite!" Philosophy must consist in an unseizable affirmation (because it must imitate life); the philosopher must follow the procedure of the artist (read "without rigour"); rigour "which is perhaps appropriate in a mathematical demonstration, is totally unsuitable to a philosophical discussion." A thinker of the great century (Spinoza) astonished his time by saying that confused ideas come from God as certainly as clear ideas; our age would be astonished to hear that distinct ideas come from God as surely as vague ones. That is still another measure of our progress.

At the bottom of this taste for the writer who is exempt from all clear and distinct ideas we may discover something more profound and apparently common to all societies: the attraction to the weak intellect, the aversion to the powerful mind. Let the reader go back in history to the galleries of talents, let him think of the names of poets, thinkers, journalists, conversationalists, welcomed by good society. How many fine, delicate, lovable, grace-

ful spirits; how few vigorous minds! How many Meleagers, younger Plinys, de la Fares, Abbé de Choisy, Jules Janins, Caros, Bergsons; how few de La Rochefoucaulds and Montesquieus! How many feminine natures; how few men! And really what should they be doing with vigorous minds whose sole excuse for living is in the search for whatever can charm? And who can deny that frailty has a certain charm?

Finally, side by side with this scorn for distinction in ideas, let us note this trait in our modern society: its complete *incapacity* to make distinctions. The two things are not necessarily combined, for it is even considered elegant to have a quality and to despise it. We need only observe the lightest conversation in a salon, on politics, art, religion, love, to witness the extraordinary mental confusion which obtains among the speakers, their radical incapacity to see the distinction between the least subtle, the most commonplace, ideas; it is just a universal swamp in which we see that they have not the vaguest idea of the difference, for example, between political liberty and the privilege of doing as one pleases, between the moving power of a work of art and its æsthetic value, between the sentiment of religion and formal belief, between love and tenderness. Likewise every one has learned that our society folk are incapable of expressing with any precision the simplest idea, even the simplest fact, to give with precision the simplest information, or to say in regard to the simplest matters what they want to say and no more. We cannot help reflecting that these are the children of a nation where the men and women of the world were called Retz, St. Evremond, La Rochefoucauld, Mme. de La Fayette, in which young women constantly made distinctions like the following: "Passive adoration (*oraison*) consists of pure love but pure love can exist without it" (Mme. de Grignan). The disappearance of every kind of dialectic power in a French society will be one of the stupefactions of history.

The same thing prevails with our writers. It is really incredible how totally ignorant of logic most of them are. We are not speaking of the terrible mess they get into when they try to handle ideas (see for example the polemics of certain coryphees, at the beginning of the war, against M. Paul Souday on the subject of Nietzsche, Renan, the mysticism of the war). We are speaking of much simpler things. I know one of our "masters"

who wrote a letter to a minister in order to change his military status; he went about it in such a fashion that to find out what he was driving at they had to ask him to begin again three times in succession. Another asked the readers of a great newspaper for subscriptions to a charitable work; he expressed himself so clearly concerning the method of remitting money that for eight days the columns of the paper were filled with letters asking for explanations. Compare that with the precision of a Racine giving the smallest details of personal hygiene to his son, or with the letters of Victor Hugo to his editors. Nowhere else does the lowering of classic culture appear so clearly.

#### THE RELIGION OF MUSIC MUSICALIZATION OF ALL THE ARTS PLASTIC SENSIBILITY AND MUSICAL SENSIBILITY

An interesting aspect of this rejection of all artistic precision is the supreme value which our contemporaries attach to music among the arts, because they consider it "the art without forms," "pure fluidity," the art which has been "finally liberated from the categories of space." (Let us remember in this connection their quite special adoration for a certain modern music which is "invertebrate," their scorn for clear and definite musical ideas, for "punctuation." They want music to be the model for the other arts, want poetry, painting, sculpture, and ideology itself to be musical, to imitate the "pure mobility," and indeterminateness of this chosen art. This desire to *musicalize* all the arts shows better than anything else that our contemporaries do not propose to draw any intellectual experience from art but want a pure sensation, as from a potion or from a flower. Moreover, music is not venerated by them for its absence of form alone, but for the state of "pure emotion" which it has the power to create, for its close connection with "consciousness in its pure state," "whence all representation has vanished, in a condition which is vegetative and irreducible to the terms of the intellect." Also for the power it has to "suggest instead of expressing," a trick which is now demanded even of ideology; it is venerated also, although less dogmatically, for the

particularly disquieting thing, sound. We will speak later of another religion of music, created because it can express the human soul in its profound (that is to say unintellectual) regions.

Who will write the history of the respect in which our different sensibilities have been held throughout the ages? It would be interesting to note that this regard for sensitiveness to music is a recent thing. Sallust declared that a certain Roman lady "sang with more taste than was proper for a decent woman." The imperial epoch seems to have combined a great sensitiveness to music with a very small esteem for this taste; Ammianus Marcellinus (it is true he was a soldier) protests against this predilection of his contemporaries. Nearer to our time, the great Arnould deplored "that poison of Lulli's songs which is infecting all of France." We will be told that he was a cleric, but would the ecclesiastics of our time say as much? Mme. de Motteville denounced Louis XIII's taste for music as a sign of his unhealthy nature. Among the congenital weaknesses of the Duc de Bourgogne, St. Simon writes down his penchant for music. Mlle. de Lespinasse confesses her liking for this art, but, she says, she likes it only when she is unwell, which is far from saying that, for her, it is a superior art. To-day sensitiveness to music makes one a patrician of the spirit; only a few cynics, indifferent to the contempt of their fellows, confess that they care nothing for it.

The tendency thus shown by modern society can be defined more closely still. Let us distinguish two kinds of sensibility. The first, of which sight and touch are the principal modes, groups itself around the idea of form and, from that source derives a special character of precision and firmness; let us call it plastic sensibility. The other, represented by hearing, taste and smell, freed from this rigid armour, consists in sensation without contour, incomparably more disquieting; let us call it musical sensibility. The first seems a more localized sensibility, no doubt because it touches nerves which are more highly developed and specialized, and affects only a specific corner of our consciousness. The second seems to invade the entire being. The first is a centralized and correlated sensibility; it is the source of poise. The second is precisely a sort of decentralization of consciousness, in a diffused and scattered sensation, a notable source of intoxication and vertigo. Granting this, it must be admitted that the sensibility toward which

modern society tends, that which it exalts by its judgements and by its doctrines, that which it desires that art should satisfy, is eminently a musical sensibility.

To make clear what we mean by musical sensibility we may cite the feeling of love (an abstraction, of course, from the idea of the object which causes the feeling; as, for example, that produced by an aphrodisiac). Perhaps we should not consider this sensation in men, where it seems to be localized, but rather in women, where it is, apparently, diffuse and widely distributed.

In the matter of music itself we must remember that side by side with music as source of diffusion, there exists another, a source of stability: plastic music. This is the distinction which Plato made when he banished the Lydian mode from the State and recommended the Dorian. Bossuet, too, seems to have been conscious of this distinction in these curious lines:

"The music which Diodorus held up to the contempt of the Egyptians because it tended to soften their courage was undoubtedly that soft and effeminate music which inspires only pleasure and false tenderness. For the Egyptians were far from despising that generous music, the noble harmonies of which elevate *mind* and heart."

It could almost be maintained that all music, in so far as it is a work of art, is, in a certain sense, plastic and not musical; that, by the very fact of its essence being an absence of form, music could not become a work of art except by abjuring, in some measure, its proper nature and adopting that of plastic art; like the drowning man, of whom Bergson speaks, who succeeded in saving his life only by falling back upon whatever solidity the water still afforded. One might maintain that the great creators in music, those above all who delighted in the most fluid material, a Wagner or a Debussy, were creators only because they could, to a certain extent, overcome their pure love of music and impose on themselves the habits of plastic art. Here we evoke an intellectual drama in which the imagination of our readers may find entertainment.

The same reflection applies to the writers who by nature delighted in fluid material and yet were artists: the author of the *Réveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, Chateaubriand, and often Loti.

Renan seems to us to be inferior to these masters because he was not always able to impose a plastic form on the fluid material which appealed to him.

This distinction between the plastic and the musical might be used equally well in judging that literature which aims to touch our sensibility alone, loosely called romanticism. We should recognize that the romanticism of 1830, except that of Lamartine, perhaps, is plastic, while that which dates from the second half of the nineteenth century (Verlaine, Barrès) is eminently musical. Let us recall that Baudelaire injected the exploitation of the senses of taste and smell, of which Hugo and his time never dreamed. The special and systematic predilection of our contemporaries for musical romanticism would also be granted. The following, we think, is a good example of plastic romanticism:

"Our Bethlehemites were seated round their camp fire, their muskets resting on the earth, and near them their tethered horses forming a second and wider circle. When they had drunk their coffee and spoken much together, all the Arabs except the sheik fell silent. By the firelight I saw his expressive gestures, his black beard and white teeth, the changing contours of his mantle as he continued his story. His companions listened to him with a profound attention, all bending forward their faces toward the flames, uttering a cry of admiration, sometimes repeating with emphasis the gestures of the speaker; the heads of some of the horses taking shape in the darkness, the scene the most picturesque character, when one saw behind it the faint outlines of the country of the Dead Sea and the mountains of Judea." (Chateaubriand, *Itineraire*.)

It would be superfluous to underline the extraordinary plasticity of this page, its will to stir us, according to the *mot* of a classic (Buffon), by the "vivid and well defined" image. Superfluous also to iterate how much less it would be relished by our readers than such "fluidities"—at times of an art quite as happy in other respects—as *la Mort de Venise* or *Pêcheur d'Islande*.

*To be Continued*



## THREE POEMS

BY EVELYN SCOTT

### SPRING SONG

Sap crashes suddenly through dead roots:  
Sap that bites,  
Harsh,  
Impatient,  
Bitter as gold.

My God, my sisters, how dark, how silent, how heavy is earth!  
Shoulders strain against this eternity,  
Against the trickling loam.  
Earth dropped on the heart like a nerveless hand:  
On the red mouth  
Earth coils,  
Heavy as a serpent.  
Light has come back to the darkness,  
To the shadow,  
To the coolness of blackened leaves.

### AIR FOR G STRINGS

White hands of God  
With fingers like strong twigs flowering  
Rock me in leaves of iron,  
Leaves of blue.



Hands of God

Fashioned of clouds

Have finger tips that balance the almond white moon.

The pale sky is like a flower,

White tipped and pink tipped with dawn.

The white hands of God gather the blossoms with fingers  
that hold me,

Cloud fingers like milk in the azure night,

Weaving silver chords:

Milk white hammocks of light in which God rocks me to sleep—  
And one star, diamond sprinkled.

#### ASCENSION:

#### AUTUMN DUSK IN CENTRAL PARK

Featureless people glide with dim motion through a quivering blue-  
silver;

Boats merge with the bronze-gold welters about their keels.

The trees float upward in grey and green flames.

Clouds, swans, boats, trees, all gliding up a hillside

After some grey old women who lift their gaunt forms

From falling shrouds of leaves. . . .

Thin fingered twigs clutch darkly at nothing.

Crackling skeletons shine.

Along the smutted horizon of Fifth Avenue

The hooded houses watch heavily

With oily gold eyes.

## ADOLF

BY D. H. LAWRENCE

**W**HEN we were children our father often worked on the night-shift. Once it was spring-time, and he used to arrive home, black and tired, just as we were downstairs in our night-dresses. Then night met morning face to face, and the contact was not always happy. Perhaps it was painful to my father to see us gaily entering upon the day into which he dragged himself soiled and weary. He didn't like going to bed in the spring morning sunshine.

But sometimes he was happy, because of his long walk through the dewy fields in the first daybreak. He loved the open morning, the crystal and the space, after a night down pit. He watched every bird, every stir in the trembling grass, answered the whinneying of the pee-wits and tweeted to the wrens. If he could, he also would have whinnied and tweeted and whistled, in a native language that was not human. He liked non-human things best.

One sunny morning we were all sitting at table when we heard his heavy slurring walk up the entry. We became uneasy. His was always a disturbing presence, trammeling. He passed the window darkly, and we heard him go into the scullery and put down his tin bottle. But directly he came into the kitchen. We felt at once that he had something to communicate. No one spoke. We watched his black face for a second.

"Give me a drink," he said.

My mother hastily poured out his tea. He went to pour it out into the saucer. But instead of drinking, he suddenly put something on the table, among the tea-cups. A tiny brown rabbit! A small rabbit, a mere morsel, sitting against the bread as still as if it were a made thing.

"A rabbit! A young one! Who gave it you, father?"

But he laughed enigmatically, with a sliding motion of his yellow-grey eyes, and went to take off his coat. We pounced on the rabbit.

"Is it alive? Can you feel its heart beat?"

My father came back and sat down heavily in his arm-chair. He

dragged his saucer to him, and blew his tea, pushing out his red lips under his black moustache.

"Where did you get it, father?"

"I picked it up," he said, wiping his naked forearm over his mouth and beard.

"Where?"

"Is it a wild one?" came my mother's quick voice.

"Yes, it is."

"Then why did you bring it?" cried my mother.

"Oh, we wanted it," came our cry.

"Yes, I've no doubt you did—" retorted my mother. But she was drowned in our clamour of questions.

On the field path, my father had found a dead mother rabbit and three dead little ones—this one alive, but unmoving.

"But what had killed them, Daddy?"

"I couldn't say, my child. I s'd think she'd eaten something."

"Why did you bring it!" again my mother's voice of condemnation. "You know what it will be."

My father made no answer, but we were loud in protest.

"He must bring it. It's not big enough to live by itself. It would die," we shouted.

"Yes, and it will die now. And then there'll be another outcry."

My mother set her face against the tragedy of dead pets. Our hearts sank.

"It won't die, father, will it? Why will it? It won't."

"I s'd think not," said my father.

"You know well enough it will. Haven't we had it all before—!" said my mother.

"They dunna always pine," replied my father testily.

But my mother reminded him of other little wild animals he had brought, which had sulked and refused to live, and brought storms of tears and trouble in our house of lunatics.

Trouble fell on us. The little rabbit sat on our lap, unmoving, its eye wide and dark. We brought it milk, warm milk, and held it to its nose. It sat as still as if it was far away, retreated down some deep burrow, hidden, oblivious. We wetted its mouth and whiskers with drops of milk. It gave no sign, did not even shake off the wet white drops. Somebody began to shed a few secret tears.

"What did I say?" cried my mother. "Take it and put it down the field."

Her command was in vain. We were driven to get dressed for school. There sat the rabbit. It was like a tiny obscure cloud. Watching it, the emotions died out of our breast. Useless to love it, to yearn over it. Its little feelings were all ambushed. They must be circumvented. Love and affection were a trespass upon it. A little wild thing, it became more mute and asphyxiated still in its own arrest, when we approached with love. We must not love it. We must circumvent it, for its own existence.

So I passed the order to my sister and my mother. The rabbit was not to be spoken to, nor even looked at. Wrapping it in a piece of flannel, I put it in an obscure corner of the cold parlour, and put a saucer of milk before its nose. My mother was forbidden to enter the parlour whilst we were at school.

"As if I should take any notice of your nonsense," she cried, affronted. Yet I doubt if she ventured into that parlour.

At midday, after school, creeping into the front room, there we saw the rabbit still and unmoving in the piece of flannel. Strange grey-brown neutralization of life, still living! It was a sore problem to us.

"Why won't it drink its milk, mother?" we whispered. Our father was asleep.

"It prefers to sulk its life away, silly little thing." A profound problem. Prefers to sulk its life away! We put young dandelion leaves to its nose. The sphinx was not more oblivious.

At tea-time, however, it had hopped a few inches, out of its flannel, and there it sat again, uncovered, a little solid cloud of muteness, brown, with unmoving whiskers. Only its side palpitated slightly with life.

Darkness came, my father set off to work. The rabbit was still unmoving. Dumb despair was coming over the sisters, a threat of tears before bed-time. Clouds of my mother's anger gathered, as she muttered against my father's wantonness.

Once more the rabbit was wrapped in the old pit-singlet. But now it was carried into the scullery and put under the copper fire-place, that it might think itself inside a burrow. The saucers were placed about, four or five, here and there on the floor, so that if the little creature should chance to hop abroad, it could not fail to come

upon some food. After this my mother was allowed to take from the scullery what she wanted and then she was forbidden to open the door.

When morning came, and it was light, I went downstairs. Opening the scullery door I heard a slight scuffle. Then I saw dabbles of milk all over the floor and tiny rabbit-droppings in the saucers. And there the miscreant, the tips of his ears showing behind a pair of boots. I peeped at him. He sat bright-eyed and askance, twitching his nose and looking at me while not looking at me.

He was alive—very much alive. But still we were afraid to trespass much on his confidence.

"Father!" My father was arrested at the door. "Father, the rabbit's alive."

"Back your life it is," said my father.

"Mind how you go in."

By evening, however, the little creature was tame, quite tame. He was christened Adolf. We were enchanted by him. We couldn't really love him, because he was wild and loveless to the end. But he was an unmixed delight.

We decided he was too small to live in a hutch—he must live at large in the house. My mother protested, but in vain. He was so tiny. So we had him upstairs, and he dropped his tiny pills on the bed and we were enchanted.

Adolf made himself instantly at home. He had the run of the house, and was perfectly happy, with his tunnels and his holes behind the furniture.

We loved him to take meals with us. He would sit on the table humping his back, sipping his milk, shaking his whiskers and his tender ears, hopping off and hobbling back to his saucer, with an air of supreme unconcern. Suddenly he was alert. He hobbled a few tiny paces, and reared himself up inquisitively at the sugar-basin. He fluttered his tiny fore-paws, and then reached and laid them on the edge of the basin, whilst he craned his thin neck and peeped in. He trembled his whiskers at the sugar, then did his best to lift down a lump.

"Do you think I will have it! Animals in the sugar pot!" cried my mother, with a rap of her hand on the table.

Which so delighted the electric Adolf that he flung his hind-quarters and knocked over a cup.

"It's your own fault, mother. If you left him alone—"

He continued to take tea with us. He rather liked warm tea. And he loved sugar. Having nibbled a lump, he would turn to the butter. There he was shooed off by our parent. He soon learned to treat her shooing with indifference. Still, she hated him to put his nose in the food. And he loved to do it. And so one day between them they overturned the cream-jug. Adolf deluged his little chest, bounced back in terror, was seized by his little ears by my mother and bounced down on the hearth-rug. There he shivered in momentary discomfort, and suddenly set off in a wild flight to the parlour.

This last was his happy hunting ground. He had cultivated the bad habit of pensively nibbling certain bits of cloth in the heart-rug. When chased from this pasture, he would retreat under the sofa. There he would twinkle in Buddhist meditation until suddenly, no one knew why, he would go off like an alarm clock. With a sudden bumping scuffle he would whirl out of the room, going through the doorway with his little ears flying. Then we would hear his thunder-bolt hurtling in the parlour, but before we could follow, the wild streak of Adolf would flash past us, on an electric wind that swept him round the scullery and carried him back, a little mad thing, flying possessed like a ball round the parlour. After which ebullition he would sit in a corner composed and distant, twitching his whiskers in abstract meditation. And it was in vain we questioned him about his outbursts. He just went off like a gun, and was as calm after it as a gun that smokes placidly.

Alas, he grew up rapidly. It was almost impossible to keep him from the outer door.

One day, as we were playing by the stile, I saw his brown shadow loiter across the road and pass into the field that faced the houses. Instantly a cry of "Adolf!" a cry he knew full well. And instantly a wind swept him away down the sloping meadow, his tail twinkling and zig-zagging through the grass. After him we pelted. It was a strange sight to see him, ears back, his little loins so powerful, flinging the world behind him. We ran ourselves out of breath, but could not catch him. Then somebody headed him off, and he sat with sudden unconcern, twitching his nose under a bunch of nettles.

His wanderings cost him a shock. One Sunday morning my



father had just been quarreling with a pedlar, and we were hearing the aftermath indoors, when there came a sudden unearthly scream from the yard. We flew out. There sat Adolf cowering under a bench, whilst a great black and white cat glowered intently at him, a few yards away. Sight not to be forgotten. Adolf rolling back his eyes and parting his strange muzzle in another scream, the cat stretching forward in a slow elongation.

Ha, how we hated that cat! How we pursued him over the chapel wall and across the neighbours' gardens. Adolf was still only half grown.

"Cats!" said my mother. "Hideous detestable animals, why do people harbour them?"

But Adolf was becoming too much for her. He dropped too many pills. And suddenly to hear him clumping downstairs when she was alone in the house was startling. And to keep him from the door was impossible. Cats prowled outside. It was worse than having a child to look after.

Yet we would not have him shut up. He became more lusty, more callous than ever. He was a strong kicker, and many a scratch on face and arms did we owe to him. But he brought his own doom on himself. The lace curtains in the parlour—my mother was rather proud of them—fell on to the floor very full. One of Adolf's joys was to scuffle wildly through them as though through some foamy undergrowth. He had already torn rents in them.

One day he entangled himself altogether. He kicked, he whirled round in a mad nebulous inferno. He screamed—and brought down the curtain-rod with a smash, right on the best beloved pelargonium, just as my mother rushed in. She extricated him, but she never forgave him. And he never forgave either. A heartless wildness had come over him.

Even we understood that he must go. It was decided; after a long deliberation, that my father should carry him back to the wild-woods. Once again he was stowed into the great pocket of the pit-jacket.

"Best pop him i' th' pot," said my father, who enjoyed raising the wind of indignation.

And so, next day, our father said that Adolf, set down on the edge of the coppice, had hopped away with utmost indifference, neither elated nor moved. We heard it and believed. But many,



many were the heart searchings. How would the other rabbits receive him? Would they smell his tameness, his humanized degradation, and rend him? My mother pooh-poohed the extravagant idea.

However, he was gone, and we were rather relieved. My father kept an eye open for him. He declared that several times, passing the coppice in the early morning, he had seen Adolf peeping through the nettletalks. He had called him, in an odd, high-voiced, cajoling fashion. But Adolf had not responded. Wildness gains so soon upon its creatures. And they become so contemptuous then of our tame presence. So it seemed to me. I myself would go to the edge of the coppice, and call softly. I myself would imagine bright eyes between the nettle-stalks, flash of a white, scornful tail past the bracken. That insolent white tail, as Adolf turned his flank on us! It reminded me always of a certain rude gesture, and a certain unprintable phrase, which may not even be suggested.

But when naturalists discuss the meaning of the white rabbit's tail, that rude gesture and still ruder phrase always come to my mind. Naturalists say that the rabbit shows his white tail in order to guide his young safely after him, as a nurse-maid's flying strings are the signal to her toddling charges to follow on. How nice and naïve! I only know that my Adolf wasn't naïve. He used to whisk his flank at me, push his white feather in my eye, and say *Merde!* It's a rude word—but one which Adolf was always semophoring at me, flag-wagging it with all the derision of his narrow haunches.

That's a rabbit all over—insolence, and the white flag of spiteful derision. Yes, and he keeps his flag flying to the bitter end, sporting, insolent little devil that he is. See him running for his life. Oh, how his soul is fanned to an ecstasy of fright, a fugitive whirlwind of panic. Gone mad, he throws the world behind him, with astonishing hind legs. He puts back his head and lays his ears on his sides and rolls the white of his eyes in sheer ecstatic agony of speed. He knows the awful approach behind him: bullet or stoat. He knows! He knows, his eyes are turned back almost into his head. It is agony. But it is also ecstasy. Ecstasy! See the insolent white flag bobbing. He whirls on the magic wind of terror. All his pent-up soul rushes into agonized electric emotion of fear. He flings himself on, like a falling star swooping into extinction.

White heat of the agony of fear. And at the same time, bob! bob! bob! goes the white tail, *merde! merde! merde!* it says to the pursuer. The rabbit can't help it. In his utmost extremity he still flings the insult at the pursuer. He is the unconquerable fugitive, the indomitable meek. No wonder the stoat becomes vindictive

Ant if he escapes, this precious rabbit! Don't you see him sitting there, in his earthly nook, a little ball of silence and rabbit-triumph? Don't you see the glint on his black eye? Don't you see, in his very immobility, how the whole world is *merde* to him? No conceit like the conceit of the meek. And if the avenging angel in the shape of the ghostly ferret steals down on him, there comes a shriek of terror out of that little hump of self-satisfaction sitting motionless in a corner. Falls the fugitive. But even fallen, his white feather floats. Even in death it seems to say: "I am the meek, I am the righteous, I am the rabbit. All you rest, you are evil-doers, and you shall be *bien emmerdé*."

## POEMES

PAR GUY-CHARLES CROS

### NOCTURNE

Ce soir la lune se baigne  
indolemment dans son halo  
comme une femme qui règne  
nue, dans les rides de l'eau.

Aux chants liquides des crapauds  
le vent mêle son soliloque;  
une enfant trop tendre sanglote  
le front blotti dans ses rideaux . . .

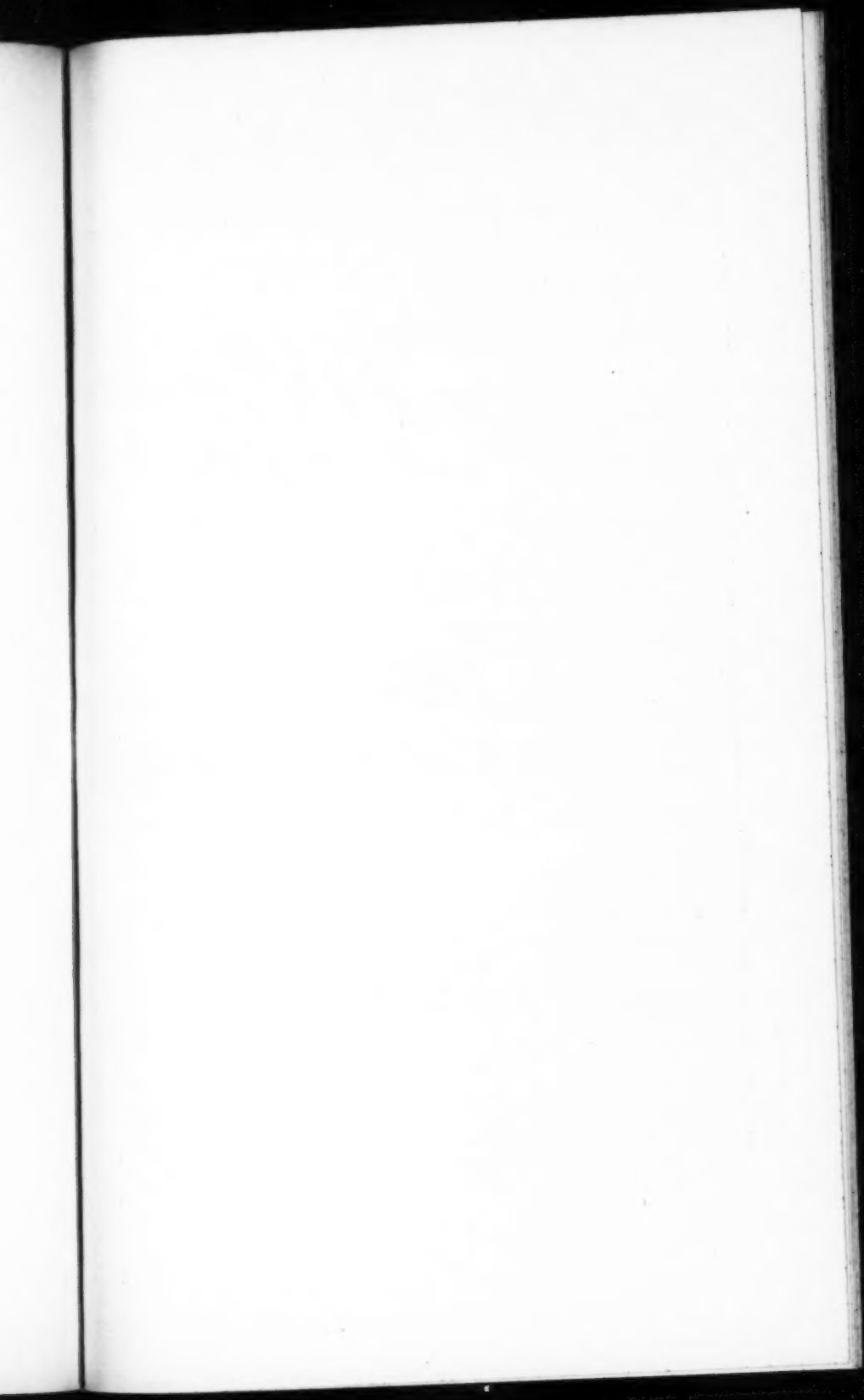
Mais son bien-aimé qui se moque  
des nostalgies mélancoliques  
se promène en fumant sa pipe  
et se dit qu'il pleuvra tantôt.

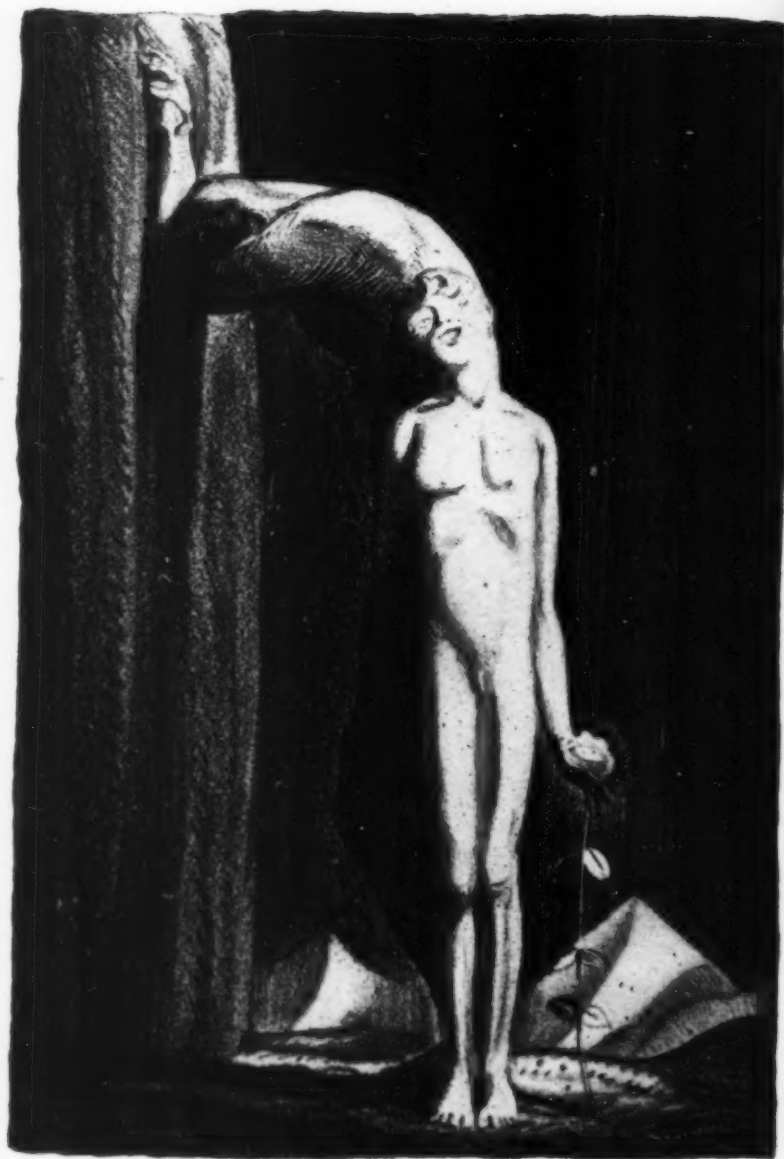
### VILLONESQUE

Tous ceux qui parlaient tant et tant  
exposant, tranchant, pérorant,  
durs gosiers, briseurs de tympanes,  
prêtres, avocats, députés,  
causeurs de salons, de cafés,  
diseurs de rien, bavards fieffés,  
la mort leur a fermé la bouche  
et l'on entend voler les mouches  
sur les tertres où sont couchés . . .  
—De même en sera pour nous tous.

Aussi, ces dames d'autrefois,  
dévotes, maîtresses de rois,  
ambitieuses sans foi ni loi,  
diplomates en cotillons,  
grandes dames en Cendrillons  
si fort toujours en action,  
que la mort nous les fait muettes  
silencieuses et discrètes !  
Tout s'est tu, jusqu'aux oraisons . . .  
—Ainsi de vous toutes, pauvrettes.

Or, vous, féminines ardeurs,  
et vous, tribuns et orateurs,  
intrigantes ou discoureurs,  
n'épargnez ni travaux ni veilles !  
Le temps bataille contre vous,  
si tôt il vous met à genoux,  
Demain vous serez vieux et vieilles,  
à tous est échu sort pareil ;  
mais aurez marché jusqu' au bout  
De vos sentiers ou de vos routes,  
serez restés folles et fous . . .  
Ainsi soit-il de tous et toutes.





FATHER AND SON. BY ROCKWELL KENT.

# MODERN FORMS

*This department of The Dial is devoted to exposition and consideration of the less traditional types of art.*

## THE DEMOCRATIZED ARTS

BY HENRY McBRIDE

IN browsing through the "Laws" that Jowett insists were really written by the great Plato, I chanced upon one of those passages, frequent enough in the writings of the ancients, in which the question which has become almost the whole question to contemporary young artists, pops up.

In the second book, an Athenian Stranger, who is discoursing upon music, prohibition, and politics, chances to say:

"In all things which have an accompanying charm, either this very charm is the chief part of their good, or, secondly, there is some truth, or, thirdly, profit in them; for example, I should say that there is a charm which accompanies eating and drinking, and the use of food in general, and this we call pleasure; but that which we term the rightness and utility of the things served up to us, or more precisely their healthful quality, is also their highest rectitude."

There are certain belligerent moderns of my acquaintance who would bristle sufficiently at the theory that bodily health is the highest rectitude, but the individual to whom the remark was addressed merely replied with true Platonian docility, "Very true"; and the Athenian Stranger went on, with calm placidity, to tear his own argument to tatters, at least for moderns, by giving it away, in the application of his analogy to the laws of music, that art to him meant "imitation," and nothing more.

"And yet the poets go on and make still further havoc by separ-



ating the rhythm and the figure of the dance from the melody, setting words to metre without music, and also separating the melody and rhythm from the words, using the lyre or the flute alone. For when there are no words, it is very difficult to recognize the meaning of the harmony and rhythm, or to see that any worthy object is imitated by them. And we must acknowledge that all this sort of thing, which aims only at swiftness and smoothness and a brutish noise, and uses the flute and the lyre not as the mere accompaniments of the dance and song, is exceedingly rude and coarse."

Compare this with "B. V." Thompson's unsurprising and uncontestedly modern remark upon Shelley: "So subtly sweet and rich are the tones, so wonderfully are developed the perfect cadences, that the meaning of the words of the singing is lost and dissolved in the overwhelming rapture of the impression," and the amount of water that has rolled beneath the bridges since Plato's day, or rather since the Athenian Stranger's day, may be easily gauged.

But one fact at least may be gleaned from the pseudo-Platonic "Laws," that Music got there first. Poetry may have been a close second, but it was not until the present that art became free. Our rather dull Athenian acquaintance remarks that "Music is more celebrated than any other kind of imitation and therefore requires the greatest care of them all"; an idea that passed current with the fashionable for several thousand years, and, in fact, until about twenty years ago. I heard it when first released from school, upon venturing into the studios. It was a musician who said it, of course. He wheeled about upon his piano-stool, and with the double-assurance that comes from the knowledge that what one says is not original, opined that "Music was the greatest of all arts because it was the least tangible." I was vaguely troubled, feeling instinctively that there was something wrong with the assertion, yet was unable to find an answer to it. At present one doesn't have to answer it. Modern painting, thanks to Cézanne, Seurat, Picasso, Matisse, has become as intangible as any musician could wish, and the democracy of the arts, now that the great war is over, matches not insignificantly with the times we live in.

The Athenian Stranger's cry that modern art is "exceedingly rude and coarse" is less echoed now than it was. Undoubtedly it

was accused of roughness. It was thought vulgar merely because it was a change. Human beings are more afraid of being convicted of vulgarity than of sin, and exclaim "shocking" chiefly to distract attention from themselves. The fear of fears is lest one see oneself in the mirrors that these artists are always holding up to nature. But that danger is over when the mirror is broken—that is to say—when the artist dies. The sternest disciplinarian views the gay doings of the court of Charles II with amused tolerance, and clergymen no longer passionately impeach Walt Whitman. Now that the influence of "Camille" has lapsed from our stage, one is almost tempted to remould the closing lines of that moving piece into a generality more suited to contemporary needs; such as, "immorality is anything that has been insufficiently studied."

The familiarity with the new pictures obliged by the practice of my profession, soon robbed these productions of their terrors for me, and now I see in the mistiest of them what I used to see in the concrete classics—the aspirations of their makers. Lovable personalities make themselves felt in the new forms as in the old and nobility is *de trop* in neither abstract painting nor *vers libre*. Immorality is there, as in the classics, neither more nor less, but since it is not the whole of man, there is no occasion to make it the whole of the argument. It is true that extremely young writers take an unholy joy in trying to shock, but without genius they cannot upset the bourgeois, so why should we worry over them? As I said before, it is not wickedness that alarms so much as the note of change. We have the police to protect us from malefactors, but who can safeguard us from an insidious idea? Felicien Rops, with his out-and-out indelicacy, never kicked up half the row that good Mr Percy Bysshe Shelley did; though Felicien Rops, to be sure, was a very great artist, too, particularly now that he is safely dead. (I see myself approaching nearer and nearer to the essay on Art and Morals, which seems to be expected of every one, at least in America, who lives long enough. If I am forced into it, I mean to be as long and as deadly as Tolstoi was on the subject, so beware, gentle reader.) So those who hope and fear for modern art need not worry over its salaciousness. Its difficulty does not lie there so much as in the fact that in limiting its forces exclusively to what the Athenian Stranger calls "pleasure," it limits its audience, for who feel this pleasure except those who read the techniques of the

arts, and who read the techniques of the arts but those who practise them? Heaven knows, those who practise the arts are comparatively few, especially in these states of America.

However, what artists ever think of their audiences? Why should they think of them, when the Wordsworth who now seems as English as an English hedge-row had "to create the taste by which he finally was appreciated?"

Before parting for ever with the Athenian Stranger, it is only just, since I have disagreed with him so completely, to admit that on one point, the drink question, I am still heartily in accord with him. He would regulate the use of wine "which has many excellences" but not abolish it. His regulations, contrasted with our modern ones, indeed seem highly sensible. He says:

"I would go farther than the Cretans and Lacedaemonians, and am disposed rather to the law of the Carthaginians, that no one while he is on a campaign should be allowed to taste wine at all; but I would say that he should drink water during all that time, and that in the city no slave, male or female, should ever drink wine; and that no rulers should drink wine during their year of office, nor pilots of vessels, nor judges while on duty should taste wine at all; nor any one who is going to hold a consultation about any matter of importance, nor in the day time at all, unless in consequence of exercise, or as medicine; nor again at night, when any one, either man or woman, is minded to get children. There are numberless other cases also in which those who have good sense and good laws ought not to drink wine, so that if what I say is true, no city will need many vineyards."

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EZRA POUND. BY WYNDHAM LEWIS

## H. S. MAUBERLY

BY EZRA POUND

### ODE POUR L'ELECTION DE SON SEPULCHRE

For three years, out of key with his time,  
He strove to resuscitate the dead art  
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"  
In the old sense. Wrong from the start—

No, hardly, but, seeing he had been born  
In a half savage country, out of date;  
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;  
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait;

Ἰδμεν γὰρ τοι πάνθ' ὅσ' ἐν Τροίῃ  
Caught in the unstopped ear;  
Giving the rocks small lee-way  
The chooped seas held him, therefore, that year.

His true Penelope was Flaubert,  
He fished by obstinate isles;  
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair  
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by "the march of events,"  
He passed from men's memory in *l'an trentiesme*  
*De son eage*; the case presents  
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem.



## II

The age demanded an image  
Of its accelerated grimace,  
Something for the modern stage,  
Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries  
Of the inward gaze;  
Better mendacities  
Than the classics in paraphrase!

The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,  
Made with no loss of time,  
A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster  
Or the "sculpture" of rhyme.

## III

The tea-rose, tea-gown, etc.  
Supplants the mousseline of Cos,  
The pianola "replaces"  
Sappho's barbitos.

Christ follows Dionysus,  
Phallic and ambrosial  
Made way for macerations;  
Caliban casts out Ariel.

All things are a flowing,  
Sage Heracleitus says;  
But a tawdry cheapness  
Shall reign throughout our days.

Even the Christian beauty  
Defects—after Samothrace;  
We see τὸ καλὸν  
Decreed in the market place.

Faun's flesh is not to us,  
Nor the saint's vision.  
We have the press for wafer;  
Franchise for circumcision.

All men, in law, are equals.  
Free of Peisistratus,  
We choose a knave or an eunuch  
To rule over us.

A bright Apollo,  
τὴν ἄνδρα, τὴν ἥρωα, τίνα θεόν,  
What god, man, or hero  
Shall I place a tin wreath upon?

## IV

These fought, in any case,  
and some believing, pro domo, in any case . . .

Some quick to arm,  
some for adventure,  
some from fear of weakness,  
some from fear of censure,  
some for love of slaughter, in imagination,  
learning later . . .

some in fear, learning love of slaughter;  
Died some pro patria, non dulce non et decor" . . .

walked eye-deep in hell  
believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving  
came home, home to a lie,  
home to many deceits,  
home to old lies and new infamy;

usury age-old and age-thick  
and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.  
Young blood and high blood,  
Fair cheeks, and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,  
disillusions as never told in the old days,  
hysterias, trench confessions,  
laughter out of dead bellies.

## V

There died a myriad,  
And of the best, among them,  
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,  
For a botched civilization.

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,  
Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,

For two gross of broken statues,  
For a few thousand battered books.

## YEUX GLAUQUES

Gladstone was still respected,  
When John Ruskin produced  
"Kings Treasuries"; Swinburne  
And Rossetti still abused.

Foetid Buchanan lifted up his voice  
When that faun's head of hers  
Became a pastime for  
Painters and adulterers.

The Burne-Jones cartoons  
Have preserved her eyes;  
Still, at the Tate, they teach  
Cophetua to rhapsodize;

Thin like brook-water,  
With a vacant gaze.  
The English Rubaiyat was still-born  
In those days.

The thin, clear gaze, the same  
Still darts out faun-like from the half-ruin'd face,  
Questing and passive . . .  
"Ah, poor Jenny's case." . . .

Bewildered that a world  
Shows no surprise  
At her last maquero's  
Adulteries.

## FEUILLES DE TEMPERATURE

PAR PAUL MORAND

NICE

### A VENDRE

les pagodes et les forteresses et les villas khédivales 1866.  
Les lévriers russes pleurent leurs princesses  
sans collier,  
à la fourrière.

Les magnats hongrois pendeurs de chats font les ménages.  
Adieu, chefs mexicains précinématographiques,  
qu'une seule diligence enrichissait assez,  
vieux singes chéris bagués de filigrane,  
comtes polonais dont le lit, au crépuscule, n'est pas fait,  
adieu, vieux enfants anglais  
dribbant leur ombre jusqu'au déjeuner  
sous l'agitation stupide des hirondelles.  
Victoire, victoire!

au bord des vagues de taffetas,  
les sanatoriums font faillite,  
**PERSONNE NE MEURT PLUS.**  
Ces grands nécrophores de la guerre  
font mettre de la fine Napoléon dans leur potage,

Salmis de bécasse en platine;  
Dix mille lustres,  
Lunch, Lynch.  
Qui aurait cru à tant de zibelines  
dans les stocks américains?

L'azur P. L. M. a un goût d'aloès.

## FEVER CHART

BY PAUL MORAND

### NICE

For sale  
the pagodas and fortresses and Khedival villas 1866.  
The Russian wolfhounds mourn their princesses  
collarless  
in the pound.  
Those Hungarian magnates, stringers up of cats, are setting up  
housekeeping

Farewell, precinematographic Mexican chieftains  
whom one sole diligence used to enrich sufficiently,  
old, dear monkeys basted with filigree,  
Polish counts whose beds, at dusk, have not been made.

Farewell elderly British children  
their shadows right up to lunch-time  
under the stupid perturbation of the swallows.  
Victory, victory!  
beside waves of taffeta  
the Sanitariums go bankrupt,  
NOBODY DIES ANY MORE.  
Those big necrophores of the war  
have minced Napoleon put in their soup,

Salmis of woodcock on platinum,  
Ten thousand chandeliers.  
Lunch, Lynch.  
Who could have believed there were so many sables  
in the American stocks?

The Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée azure has a flavour of aloes.



## ECHANTILLON

J'ai des émeutes plein les doigts,  
des idées plein mon chapeau melon,  
des gémissements plein mon mouchoir.  
Les gens qui s'épanchent me gâtent le malheur.  
On chercherait en vain deux heures de fou rire  
dans la Bibliothèque des Grands Ecrivains.  
L'optimisme est une boisson hygiénique  
de Boston, inventée par Emerson.  
Humide et méchant crocodile,  
J.-J.-Rousseau souille l'eau d'Evian.  
Un couple fait l'acquisition  
d'un tube de pâte à reproduire  
mais rien ne calme son tourment.  
Sur les pavés  
où déjà s'établit une lune ovoïde,  
un ciel Magenta demeure décalqué  
parmi les tuyaux articulés et les fleurs en celluloïd.

Pour moi,  
je poursuis mon petit bonhomme de chemin de croix.

## SAMPLE

My fingers are full of riots,  
My bowler hat full of ideas,  
My handkerchief is full of groans.  
The people who pour out their hearts are spoiling unhappiness  
for me.

One would hunt in vain for two hours' mad laughter  
in the Collection of Famous Authors.

Optimism is an hygienic beverage  
from Boston, invented by Emerson.

Moist and wilful crocodile  
J. J. Rousseau muddies the Evian water.

A couple make the acquisition  
of a tube paste for reproduction  
but nothing quiets their torment.  
On the pavement  
where an ovoid moon is already established,  
a Magenta sky lies counterdrawn  
among the jointed stalks and celluloid flowers.

As for me  
I pursue my charming little road to the cross.





CANDLE LIGHT. BY RICHARD BOIX





DROUGHT. BY RICHARD BOIX







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PORTRAIT. BY RICHARD BOIX

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# BOOK REVIEWS

## AN AMERICAN MORALITY

THE ORDEAL OF MARK TWAIN. *By Van Wyck Brooks.*  
12mo. 267 pages. E. P. Dutton and Company. New  
York.

THE official biography is one of the legacies of the nineteenth century. In that Arcadian period it was the right of every biographee to have his course of life presented in two or three volumes in strict accord with the theory upon which his success was based—a right as inalienable as that to a portrait by Watts, a statue by Woolner, or an epitaph by the poet laureate. It is not surprising to find that right challenged by the succeeding generation. Sheer impatience with eulogy would have accomplished the result, revolt against overdone complacency, disgust at the repetition of Aristides the Just. Moreover, the scientific mind can no longer be restrained from penetrating the sacred precincts of what used to be called private life. And finally the need of creating a past serviceable in terms of the present is in part accountable for the reappraisal. Of the first tendency Mr Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* may be taken as a shining example; of the second, Professor Harper's *Life of Wordsworth*; and of the third no better instance can be found than Mr Van Wyck Brooks' *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*.

With Walt Whitman, Mark Twain shares the distinction of being the greatest figure in American letters in the half century following the Civil War. And his motif, blared forth by the brazen horns of fame, was heard by millions, to the hundreds who listened to the persistent theme of his rival. Both Twain and Whitman were recognized as distinctly American, no longer Colonial English, voices; but while Whitman remained half forgotten at Camden, Mark Twain went up and down the great white ways of the world, from Fifth Avenue to Ringstrasse, banqueted by kings and emperors in recognition of triumphant dem-

ocracy, and greeted everywhere by vast audiences and roaring seas of applause. No literary man except Dickens has ever gathered in any comparable manner the rewards of success in his calling, and Mark Twain surpassed Dickens in so far as his world was larger and more cosmopolitan. He deserved the title which he was fond of appropriating—ambassador at large of the United States. As a public character, an American granted the freedom of the world, he deserves his full length monumental biography erected in four volumes of life and letters by Albert Bigelow Paine, as well as the intimate portrait bust by W. D. Howells.

No one will grudge him these mortuary masterpieces, certainly not Van Wyck Brooks. But Mr Brooks insists on adding a third. Mr Paine has presented Mark Twain as a national hero—Our Mark Twain. Mr Howells has left his own peculiar friendly appreciation—My Mark Twain. Mr Brooks has drawn him from a third point of view—Mark Twain's Mark Twain. He has done it with no less piety than his predecessors. Indeed, he may maintain that he is fulfilling Mark Twain's own autobiographical intention in revealing to the world what he really was. Furthermore, he is animated by a distinct missionary interest in his own generation in presenting the interior view of the much whited sepulchre. America has suffered often from taking too literally the official biographies of its post bellum heroes, from Garfield to Roosevelt. Now in the interest of art and life it is well to peruse the truth, which is, frankly, that Mark Twain was false to both—an artist who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, a prophet who remained at ease under his gourd tree, too cowardly to deliver his message "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." Here is Mr Brooks' thesis:

"It is as old as Milton that there are talents which are 'death to hide,' and I suggest that Mark Twain's talent was just so hidden. That bitterness of his was the effect of a certain miscarriage in his creative life, a balked personality, an arrested development of which he was himself almost wholly unaware, but which for him destroyed the meaning of life. The spirit of the artist in him, like the genie at last released from the bottle, over-spread in a gloomy vapour the mind it had never quite been able to possess."

Mr Brooks builds up his case with extraordinary skill. He shows Mark Twain steadily a victim of circumstances, his life a chapter of accidents, his will always subject to external control. Born into squalid poverty he was forced by his father's death to assume early financial and, more important, moral responsibilities. His promise to his mother to be and make good, in her sense of the word, was, in Mr Brooks' opinion, the beginning of his dereliction from truth to himself. From this time forth "his will is definitely enlisted on the side opposed to his essential instinct." The immediate effect, however, of his father's death was to thrust him into the printer's trade whereby he earned money to pay the premium for his education in the difficult art of piloting on the Mississippi. This, Mr Brooks thinks, was the happiest, most fulfilling achievement of Mark Twain's life, the mastery of "a career that called supremely for self-reliance, independence, initiative, judgment, skill"; and he apparently finds in this success a reason for believing that Mark Twain might have brought these same qualities to bear in other fields into which fate speedily threw him. For the Civil War put an end to river traffic. A brief episode as Confederate soldier, and he was on his way to the Nevada gold fields. Failure in prospecting reduced him to quartz-crushing. Weary of this he found relief in writing for the Virginia City Enterprise. Successful jesting took him to San Francisco. The Jumping Frog, which he wrote to please Artemus Ward, carried him to New York. Lowell's opinion that it was "the finest piece of humorous writing yet produced in America" led him to continue to work the same vein; and Anson Burlingame's advice to "seek companionship among men of superior intellect and character" caused him to join himself to the pious pilgrims who became *The Innocents Abroad*. Henry Ward Beecher told him how to make a contract for his book which made him the best paid writer in America except Horace Greeley. His success brought him the daughter of a rich coal dealer of Elmira as wife, and W. D. Howells, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, as critic and friend. Together they "combed him all to hell" as Huck Finn would say. "She edited everything I wrote. And what is more—she not only edited my works—she edited me!" The Elmira standard of respectability was high, and if Mark Twain could not always meet it in his writing, he achieved it

nobly in his social, religious, and pecuniary life. Mr Howells introduced him to select literary society in Cambridge and Boston; the Reverend Joseph Twitchell became his spiritual director at Hartford; his books brought increasing royalties, and General Grant made him his literary broker. When his publishing firm failed, H. H. Rogers took his financial rehabilitation in hand. In short, Mark Twain was subjected to every best influence that America recognizes, in home, school, church, and business—a pious mother, a devoted wife, a sympathetic pastor, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Standard Oil*. And by Mr Brooks' thesis, they all were temptations, among which Mark Twain wandered like Everyman—or devils who fought for his soul and won it.

It is uncomfortable to think of Jane Clemens, Henry Ward Beecher, the Reverend Joseph Twitchell as temptations, and still harder to think of Mr Howells and "that heavenly whiteness," Olivia Clemens, as devils, yet Mr Brooks leaves us no choice. He deduces their baleful character from the background which he establishes in his earlier chapters—the background of American life in the half century following the Civil War. It was a society based on the great experience of America, that of pioneering. Mr Brooks quotes as his fundamental position the statement of Mr Herbert Croly in *The Promise of American Life*.

"In such a society a man who persisted in one job, and who applied the most vigorous and exacting standards to his work was out of place and really inefficient. . . . It is no wonder, consequently, that the pioneer democracy viewed with distrust and aversion the man with a special vocation and high standards of achievement. Such a man did insist upon being in certain respects better than the average; and under the prevalent economic and social conditions he did impair the consistency of feeling upon which the pioneer rightly placed such a high value."

This generalization supplies the explanation for Mark Twain's failure as an artist on the negative side. For the positive impulse which led him to put material success above spiritual gain Mr Brooks refers us to the "truly religious character of American business."



"Industry and foresight, devoted to the pursuit of wealth—here we have at once the end and the means of the simple, universal morality of the Gilded Age. . . . Private enterprise became for the pioneer a sort of obligation to the society of the future; some instinct told him, to the steady welfare of his self-respect, that in serving himself well he was also serving America. To the pioneer, in short, private and public interests were identical, and the worship of success was actually a social cult."

It was this spirit uttering itself through the voices that Mark Twain trusted, which betrayed him. Even New England could not save him—New England which with the drain of its virile life into the West "had passed into the condition of a neurotic anaemia in which it has remained so largely to this day."

That Mark Twain was the victim of this environment no one will deny. That he acquiesced consciously and bitterly in his degradation it will be equally agreed. He recognized the taboo to which he submitted. "In our country," he says, "we have those three unspeakably precious things; freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and the prudence never to practice either." But instead of a protest against it, he offered merely an illustration of it. At the height of his fame came the criminal Spanish War, but except in private he was silent. He was equally reticent over the cruel and treacherous conquest of the Filipinos. In the generosity of his newly found warmth of English cousinship he upheld even the Boer War. It may be said that he had no weapons in his arsenal to fit these occasions, such as Bernard Shaw found for the Denshawi atrocity or Zola for the Dreyfus affair. But when a brother man of letters, a guest of his country, an ambassador of a cause which he held sacred, was made the victim of a brutal and hypocritical assault by the American press—when mere good nature, to say nothing of humour, would have met the situation with some success, he blenched. Mark Twain's abandonment of Maxim Gorky is one of the great refusals of his life, and the least pardonable.

It was his conviction of sin both by omission and commission that, in Mr Brooks' theory, bore fruit in the pessimism which grew upon him with the years, which found occasional expression in bits of satire such as *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg*

and *The Mysterious Stranger*, and which provoked him to plan vast mysterious confessions and satires in which the worst of "the damned human race" should once for all be spoken. It was the repression of his higher and truer instincts which resulted in his humour. That his fun-making was for the most part trivial and unworthy is obvious. At its best, it evaded present realities and was content to occupy itself with the remote incongruities of King Arthur's court or with the escapades of boy life. At its worst, it provided the protective colouring for the pioneer spirit and the religion of business. It flattered a country without art, letters, beauty, or standards, into laughing at these things.

"To degrade beauty, to debase distinction and thus to simplify the life of the man with an eye single to the main chance—that one would almost say, is the general tendency of Mark Twain's humour."

It is part of Mr Brooks' thesis that in Mark Twain the world has lost one of its great satirists—that if he could have maintained his integrity and self-mastery, if he could have brought to bear upon his literary career the energy, independence, judgement which he had developed as a river pilot the age would have had the Rabelais, Cervantes, or Swift which it so sorely needed, and which Mark Twain's admirers are never weary of assuring us that he was. This conclusion does not altogether follow from the premises. Certain qualities of the satirist Mark Twain had, but they were of the heart rather than the head. He had the *saeva indignatio* in full measure, but of the penetrating vision, the understanding mind, he shows little trace. Such essays as he made seem clumsy and crude enough. Compare *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg* with *The Modest Proposal* and the point is clear. It is as fair to argue that Mark Twain should have followed in the footsteps of Jeremiah as in those of Swift.

No, the great truth of Mr Brooks' analysis lies elsewhere. Mark Twain was not only the victim of America, he was America. As one follows his ordeal, one is constantly forced to say, "There but for the grace of God (or in spite of it) go I." Externally there is his nervous violence, finding vent in profanity; there is his proneness to excess whether in cigars or billiards; there

is the oscillation between comfort and display which made him wear slippers in the theatre and his Oxford gown at home; there is his reaction from the sermons of Dr Twitchell to the skepticism of Bob Ingersoll, and from the "heavenly whiteness" of Olivia Clemens to the Memoirs of Casanova; there is his genius for good fellowship that condoned Uncle Joe Cannon, worshipped Saint Andrew Carnegie, and placed H. H. Rogers on a pinnacle of friendship; there is the mixture of impudence and cringing toward those whom he too readily accepted as superiors, the New England Brahmins and the English; there is his subservience to W. D. Howells and his utter contempt for art; there is the revolutionary inheritance that makes him (temporarily) a Mugwump; there is his sympathy with oppressed peoples coupled with the feeling of courtesy to the oppressor, the conscientious objection to unnecessary bloodshed united with a sense of wholesome decorum befitting the citizen of a country at war; there is the business zest of Get-Rich-Quick-Wallingford and his dupes combined, and the aplomb that can be tested perfectly only by bankruptcy; there is the fullest enjoyment of the comforts of civilization enriched by the cynical wish that "it was in hell where it belongs." All these things Mr Brooks brings out in his study—an immense number of little blocks delicately chiselled out of Mr Paine's biography and letters and fitted neatly together for a purpose which has already been indicated. But after all, one's final pleasure is in scrambling the blocks together anyway and seeing how inevitably they fall into the same pattern. Mr Brooks has related the Ordeal of Mark Twain. He has also written a morality which might be called Every American.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

## FOLK SEERS

VISIONS AND BELIEFS IN THE WEST OF IRELAND. *Collected and arranged by Lady Gregory. With two essays and notes by W. B. Yeats. 2 Volumes. 8vo. 636 pages. G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York.*

**M**R YEATS contributes a concluding essay to each of the volumes of *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*—an essay on Witches, Wizards, and Irish Folk Lore, and an essay on Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places. In these the poet relates to the ideas of the great seers, and to philosophic systems established or in the making, the fancies, the beliefs, and the folk-lore that Lady Gregory has collected. It is well to read the essays for they are learned and enlightening, but it is well, too, to read them without reference to the visions and beliefs that make up this collection.

One should read these for their atmosphere, their picture, their phrase—"She told me she slept in Ballylee mill last night, and that there was a cure for all things between the two wheels there." That is something that adds to our own stock of imaginative belief. Not everything in these volumes is imaginative or picturesque. Much is prosaic, for Lady Gregory's records are of the every-day experience of the people around her.

The collector assures us that leisure is an essential for those who would go in quest of folk-lore. And leisure also is to be recommended to those who would read these volumes with understanding. They are volumes to be visited as we would visit a cottage, taking a place at the hearth. Lady Gregory, of course, goes over a ground that has been gone over, to some extent, before. Lady Wilde was there and brought back her too literary but quite charming *Legends of Ireland*. Dr Douglas Hyde brought back from around the same ground his splendidly dramatic *Legends of Irish Saints and Sinners* (in *The Every Irishman Library*, published by Stokes), and an American, Mr Wentz, has studied the visions and beliefs of all the Celtic peoples and has systematized them in his *The Fairy Faith of Celtic Countries*. Lady Gregory's method is

unique, and, as I think, particularly apposite: she writes as of one neighbour writing of another; she gives, not only the peoples' thought, but something very close to the peoples' speech. Hers is a report, and something more than a report—it is a report that carries with it the smell of the peat and the gleam of the candle.

One of the things that go to make these visions and beliefs delightful is the gentleness of all of them. Here there is no fierceness and no fanaticism. It is true that the man or woman or child suspected of being a fairy changeling is treated badly. But there is no persecution—none of that frenzy about witchcraft that disgraced all the Puritanical and some of the Catholic countries at one time or another. It is worth noting that there is no word for witch in Irish, and that the only word that carries any evil significance when applied to the doings of old women is derived, as Dr Hyde has pointed out, from the Scots Gaelic, which, in turn, took its word for witchcraft from the Lowland Scots. The fairy faith as shown by Lady Gregory and other collectors of Irish lore has seldom a harsh or an ungracious side.

The Fairies presented in these records are not the diminutive beings of English tradition or the trolls of Teutonic or Norse mythology. They are as great as human beings and they show traits of the heroic spirit. In what way are they related to the Tuatha De Danaans of Celtic mythology? Like the De Danaans they are the inhabitants of Tir-nan-oge, the Land of Youth, and they are associated too with the raths and lisses—the green forts and mounds that are all over the country. But they are not defined in the traditions that Lady Gregory has recorded as the De Danaans were defined in the cycles of romance. No longer are there personalities amongst the beings of Faery as there were in the old days when Lugh, and Mananaun, and Angus represented definite conceptions. In this connection it is worth while remembering a suggestion that T. W. Rolleston made in his *Myths of the Celtic Race*: it is that the gods of the Celts were defined only in the lore of the Druids, and that for the people they remained the undefined nature powers—the spirits of woods, and plains, and mountains. The Druids made them the representatives of the arts and sciences, but while the druidic conception has faded the popular conception remained and remains in the visions and beliefs of to-day.

Lady Gregory suggests that if, by an impossible miracle, every trace and memory of Christianity could be swept out of the world "it would not shake nor destroy at all the belief of the people of Ireland in the invisible world, the cloud of witnesses, in the immortality of the life to come." Unlike our belief in immortality and the invisible world theirs colours the whole of their outlook and has concern with the growth of the crop and the milk of the cow. To read these volumes is to be transported back to the imaginative life such as is in the *Mabinogion* and the *Lays of Marie de France*. That Faery world in which such wonderful adventures befell the heroes and heroines of the early Welsh and Breton romance is all around us as we read these writings about Lady Gregory's neighbours.

Here is the reminiscence of one who saw one of the *Sidhe*.

"Yes, the *Sidhe* sing, and they have pipers among them, a bag on each side and a pipe to the mouth. I think I never told you of one I saw. I was passing a field near Kiltartan one time when I was a girl, where there was a little *lisheen*, and a field of wheat and when I was passing I heard a piper beginning to play, and I couldn't but begin to dance, it was such a good tune; and there was a boy standing there, and he began to dance too. And then my father came by, and he asked me why were we dancing, and no one playing for us. And I said there was, and I began to search through the wheat for the piper, but I couldn't find him, and I heard a voice saying, 'You'll see me yet, and it will be in a town.' Well, one Christmas eve I was in Gort and my husband with me, and that night at Gort I heard the same tune beginning again—the grandest I ever heard—and I couldn't but begin to dance. And Glynn the chair-maker heard it too, and he began to dance with me in the street, and my man thought I had gone mad, and the people gathered round us, for they could see or hear nothing. But I saw the piper well, and he had plaid clothes, blue and white, and he said, 'Didn't I tell you that when I saw you again it would be in a town.'"

How charming that episode would be in one of the stories that are at the beginning of European literature—Welsh or Breton, or the still earlier Irish.

PADRAIC COLUM



## THE NEW FRONTIER

THE NEW FRONTIER. By Guy Emerson. 12mo. 314 pages. Henry Holt and Company. New York.

MR EMERSON has written a book which is extremely interesting from several angles. It is interesting first in what it says. But it is also interesting in the simple fact that it has been written at all, and interesting in the fact that Mr Guy Emerson is the author.

From the present reviewer's standpoint the last two facts demand the fullest treatment. To go over one by one the points as Mr Emerson makes them would be to spoil the real treat in store for his readers. The New Frontier is a fascinating book; there is "something doing" after every period right down to the last. Some indication, however, must be given as to the contents, if only to let the reader know that Mr Emerson has not written a detective story, but a new treatment of an old theme which, if it perhaps belongs in the field of the dismal sciences, is important for all that, and in Mr Emerson's handling, entrancing. It will be sufficient to say that he is occupied with the old question, "What is America?" and that he is not satisfied with the current phrases "land of the free," "melting pot," and so forth, but demands that something definite, active, constructive be meant when we speak of the American character or the American spirit. Either the word "American," he says, means something outside of geography, or it does not. It evidently cannot be equated with "liberty-loving" if it is to have distinctive meaning, for others besides ourselves have loved liberty. Neither can it mean democratic in any of the senses of that word. We are not the first or the only people democratic in manners, government, or ideals. There must be something else meant, if "American" is not to be an empty word when we speak of character or spirit. This something Mr Emerson finds in our history. It is the psychological attitude produced by the westward march of civilization in this country, with all its effects on our life public and private, our government and law, which gives the American character the chance of acting as a unique reagent in the social and economic equations which constitute the



New Frontier. To those who would have us follow in the path of Russia, for instance, Mr Emerson's answer is that there is no need, seeing that in the American character itself there lies positive assurance of solutions better adapted to American conditions. And to those who would have us believe that in the *status quo* we have the Ideal Commonwealth of the Fathers, he would also reply by pointing to history and its effects on American character. It is part of our heritage, he would remind them, to be sensitive to new problems and dissatisfied with old solutions.

So far, so good. Mr Emerson knows his American history thoroughly. He is also a student of American psychology, as is shown by his success in directing the publicity of the Liberty Loan drives. These two characteristics probably account for much of his ability to strike out a new path in the already overcrowded field of "Americanization." For that there is novelty and freshness in his attack on an old problem, no one can deny. Nor should it be held against him that he has achieved this novelty through a distinctly original and forceful use of another man's idea. It is now nearly thirty years since Professor Turner of Harvard delivered the address before the Wisconsin Historical Society which experts declare to have revolutionized the specialist's conception of American history. Who but the experts, however, know how or why this revolution was accomplished? Not one man in a thousand, even among college graduates, thirty years after. Nobody has seen in all these thirty years the value to the "Average American" of Professor Turner's thought. Yet what America will do, what she can do in the future, depends upon what resources, spiritual as well as material, have been built up for her in the past. If it is true, as the experts admit, that her past has been different from that of any other nation through the conditions of her westward expansion, her psychological inheritance is different too and her future will be original and characteristic in so far forth. This fact (and it is the first outstanding merit of his book) Mr Emerson has realized as no one has yet done in all its undeniable bearings on the social and economic questions which he calls the New Frontiers. He has developed Professor Turner's profound conception of the Influence of the Frontier in a new field; for the purpose of his argument he has made it his own; he has progressed surprisingly far in an optimistic estimate of the "promise of American life."

Mr Emerson is by profession, or business if you like, a financier. A reading of his book, however, quite apart from the chapter on the democratic make-up of Wall Street's personnel, will show that his attitude on social and economic questions is that of the average American. It might be better if the average American showed some of Mr Emerson's application in his leisure hours. But in any case the average American is what we call self-made, whatever position in life he holds, and the attitude of the self-made man is Mr Emerson's attitude, as it was Abraham Lincoln's. It is the attitude of equal opportunity for all and of what Mr Emerson calls "the Politics of the Middle of the Road." Developing hitherto under the influence of the Frontier, America, he says, is neither radical nor reactionary; she does not believe in building men to a single standard, ruling out individuality, initiative, reward, whether this is accomplished on the basis of a given set of conditions or after a new deal of the cards. America is liberal. And Mr Emerson gives his idea of the American liberal (a word now much misused by the more timid writers, radical or reactionary) in these words:

"The Liberal seeks the solid and eternal middle ground, perhaps less alluring than the by-ways, but visible through the ages as the highway of the actual forward movement of the race. No man or woman can be called liberal to-day who lacks a deep sense of the necessity for adjustments and even substantial changes in the relationships of men and things. But where the radical simply wants to *go*, the liberal wants to go *somewhere*. When a half-considered measure of reform is proposed, the radical shouts 'Now,' the conservative retorts 'Never,' while the liberal may simply say 'Not Yet.'"

This Liberal America is the America of the vast majority, the America of the "silent vote," the America too often hidden under the name of "the public," which has come to be almost proverbially patient under the pestiferous activities of noisy individuals and minorities. It is remarkably heterogeneous, composed of rich, poor, and well-to-do of all ages and both sexes; it cannot be called a class or separated into classes. It is a phenomenon which upsets all the calculations of thinkers trained on the European plan.

Hitherto it has been inarticulate. Comprising within itself nearly all writers in the country on whatever topic, even the writers whose business it is to seek out a middle-class to destroy it, it has been too divided in business to show self-consciousness of purpose, ideals or power. But there are many signs that the time of indifference is over. Mr Emerson's book is one of them. The individualistic American people brought up in the tradition of personal initiative and self-reliance, but also in that of the law-court and the town meeting, is slowly but surely getting together, and the result will be more like the One Big Union than anything yet realized or dreamed by that European thing, a proletariat. It is a question of common beliefs and purposes made plain and articulate. And beliefs and purposes spring more from inheritance and early environment than from soap-box speeches and Russian books.

But Mr Emerson's book is a sign of the times not only in having been written at all, but in the manner in which it is written. It is a bold book, full of push and drive in its ideas as well as in its language. It has the self-assurance of the boxer who stands squarely on both feet as he plants his blows. Take, for instance, the treatment of capitalism. Admitted that there are evils attendant on capitalism as we now practise it, says Mr Emerson, does that mean that capitalism is wrong in principle, that it should forthwith be eradicated root and branch? His answer can be found in the chapter Fifty Million Capitalists. Or take that modern bogey called "propaganda." Propaganda has in the past been used unscrupulously, is being so used now. In the great majority of cases it has perhaps been used for evil. Mr Emerson admits all that and then writes his chapter on The Weapons of Truth. Wall Street has not always acted in accordance with the New Testament; it has not always forgotten itself entirely and acted exclusively in the interest of, say, the farmers of the Middle West. What then? Is Wall Street rotten to the core? Is it an un-American institution? Mr Emerson, who is not a New Yorker and brings to his task no predispositions in favour of Wall Street, writes his chapter, The American Federation of Brains, as sharp and accurate a reply as his reply that the cure for capitalism is more capitalism, and for propaganda more propaganda. Always he writes in the liberal spirit, but the liberal spirit attacking, not passive, the liberal spirit sure of its ground, wide awake as to its logic and its

appeal to liberal-minded men and women with their frontier background of common sense, ingenuity, frankness, fair play, and sense of humour.

Lastly there is the fact that Mr Emerson himself wrote the *New Frontier*. What does it mean when a very busy business man, untrained for the writing of books, with no axe to grind politically, no need of making money by his pen, no desire to acquire reputation as a writer, jumps into the literary prize-ring with an idea in his head and a punch in both fists? If the book itself is a sign of the times, showing that in America there are thinking men, outside of the small array of professional theorists, who are aware of the tasks ahead and aware too of a characteristically American method of settling them, the fact that Mr Emerson wrote it is even more significant. It shows that even those not called upon by reason of their training or vocation are willing to cooperate in making this new national-consciousness explicit. It shows that the dormant Gulliver is alive in every limb. A danger sign to the Lilliputians indeed!

But the book itself must be read to get its full import. It is too vital and suggestive from first to last to be caught in the flashlight of a review. From such a picture only one or two points can be expected to stand out, and these have been given briefly above. The *New Frontier* takes up an original and striking position in regard to the possibilities of further progress in America along specifically American lines, counter-attacks vigorously a number of widespread notions concerning characteristic American institutions and methods, and in the fact of its having been written at all, and by Mr Emerson in particular, furnishes an indication of the growth and nature of a certain self-consciousness in our public.

LINCOLN MACVEACH

## A KEY TO THE ENIGMAS OF THE WORLD

*TERTIUM ORGANUM: A Key to the Enigmas of the World. By P. D. Ouspensky. Translated from the Russian by Nicholas Bessaraboff and Claude Bragdon. Introduction by Claude Bragdon. 8vo. 344 pages. Manas Press. Rochester, New York.*

IN Russia, "if we are to believe its writers," people still engage in violent discussion of what is neither here nor there. Idealists, materialists, theosophists, and even Christians roar at one another and tyrannize when they have the chance. Over here where abstractions are left to badly paid professionals, where a university education in philosophy has no effect except to make a few boys skeptical about the trinity, vindications of abstract freedom seem superfluous. One has heard the ladies talking about faith on the porch. But the business man, but the scientist—beyond a prejudice in favour of church or against it—what does he care, what on earth or in heaven does he care?

The fact is we are definitely committed, and talking would appear ridiculous. The church has seen that it will not amount to anything without one billion, three hundred million dollars. There was a minister who disapproved of art because "nothing is worth while which is not self-supporting."

And just lately it has become popular among Americans to materialize the spirits. The post-bellum revival is made out of very solid stuff indeed.

Now, however, quite inapropos, comes another book out of Russia by a mathematician, the mathematical ideas of which are announced as being simple enough for the understanding of a person with a high school education (*touché!*), *Tertium Organum: A Key to the Enigmas of the World*. This title might formerly have been rewarded by a ceremonial burning, and now seems to ask for a place in the fourpenny box beside magic pamphlets and dream books. But as dream books have recently endured an apotheosis, the reader will advance with caution.

"I have called this system of higher logic *Tertium Organum* because for us it is the *third organ* (instrument) of *thought*, after those of Aristotle and Bacon. The first was the *Organon*, the second, *Novum Organum*. But the *third* existed earlier than the first."

In other words the author does not claim to have invented here anything new; and since nearly every analogy and argument advanced has attached to it some other name, one assumes that the question of originality does not enter into his purpose. Whereas among scientists one cannot find the egg for the clucking.

The purpose is unimportant. What he has accomplished is an artistic synthesis of certain liberating implications of the new mathematics with the very old affirmations of the mystics, who did not need mathematical assistance, but whose remarks can be made more palatable to moderns with the reassurances of modern authority. You get a man somewhat bewildered by telling him that the scientist whom he respects so much is beginning to think that two and two make five, and then you land on him with the full weight of the impossible. The thing has been tried before, but never, I think, so quietly.

Ouspensky's thesis is that the best way to change the world is to change one's point of view, one's consciousness; and in elaborating it, he lets out the famous secret that there is nothing else besides consciousness, that all one has to do is to take possession of one's property.

Starting with Kant's doctrine that time and space are necessary conditions of sensuous receptivity, categories of the intellect, without which we cannot approach the external world at all, he sees the present impossibility of our knowing the thing-in-itself, not as an eternal limitation, but as a problem. If the outer world is eternally limited, one can start from the inside. As a matter of fact we know already that the same things look different to different people; and how much more so to different animals. Consciousness has changed, has developed, apparently, though perhaps not according to Darwin's theory. Its further development should be conscious, will, perhaps, have to be conscious.

"The snail moves upon a single line and except for that line is



not conscious of anything. All sensations entering from the outside, the snail senses upon the lines of its motion, and these come to it out of time—from the potential they become present. For the snail our entire universe exists in the future and in the past, that is, in time." [The snail in fact is a one-dimensional being, existing in two other dimensions of which it has no inkling.]

"The higher animals—the dog, the cat, and the horse—are two-dimensional beings. To them all space appears as a surface, as a *plane*. Everything out of this plane lives for them in time."

There is not room here for the arguments with which Ouspensky reinforces this assertion, although they occupy some of the most interesting pages of the book. People who think they know animals will doubtless be annoyed at such a bald statement; but one can only suggest that they read Chapter IX, which may give them at least a respect for Ouspensky as an observer who does not tell anecdotes.

The implication, however, is inescapable. Man, too, is occupying space of which he has no inkling—fourth dimensional space—the phenomena of which appear to him in time.

Having come so far from the abysmal snail it would be a pity to stop, it would be worse than a pity. Analogies, however, are not going to help us farther. Why not say approximately what we mean?

Very obligingly Ouspensky makes the attempt, beginning again at the beginning. The axioms of Aristotle's *Organon* were these:

A is A.

A is not Not-A.

Everything is either A or Not-A.

Expressed by Bacon in Time:

That which was A will be A.

That which was Not-A will not be A.

Everything was and will be either A or Not-A.

After this pattern the superlogical axioms might be:

A is both A and Not-A.

Everything is both A and Not-A.

Everything is All.



"But these axioms are in effect absolutely impossible. . . . In reality the ideas of higher logic are inexpressible in concepts. . . . Let us therefore reconcile ourselves to the fact that it is *impossible* to express superlogical relations in our language as it is at present constituted."

There remains the method of art, which never used logic as more than a scaffolding for hints. Ouspensky, in the latter half of his book, "talks round" the subject, gives the negative side, and quotes the mystics. These are the pages in which he lands on his readers, in which, to use the more elegant phrase of the translator, he "rubs their noses" in mysticism.

Although women may feel more at home in this atmosphere, many persons will probably look back with regret at the analogies, and others will like neither analogies nor questions. But Ouspensky has got over discouragement at lack of understanding. "We" are very stupid, "we" are very lacking in boldness and a sense of responsibility, as a race. But perhaps there are in reality two races.

"The correctness of the very expression 'we' is subject to grave doubts. . . . Imagine a menagerie full of monkeys. In this menagerie a *man* is working. The monkeys observe his movements and try to imitate him but they can imitate only his visible movements; the meaning and aim of these movements are closed to them; therefore their actions will have quite another result. And should the monkeys escape from their cages and get hold of the man's tools, then perhaps they will destroy all his works and inflict great damage on themselves as well. But they will never be able to create anything. Therefore a *man* would make a great mistake if he referred to their 'work,' and spoke of them as 'we.'"

To Ouspensky as to other reformers (Jesus included) there are people with the same vision as himself and there are imbeciles. The imbeciles are not going to be punished; they are not wrong, they are quite all right, indeed. It is perfectly possible to describe *their* attributes in human language. Take their morals for example:

"Division into good and evil. Dualistic morals. Attempts to replace the inner law by the outer one. . . . Consciousness of

responsibility for immediate results of action only and in one relation only. The imposition of responsibility upon others, or upon institutions. 'I am fulfilling my *duty* or the *law*, and I am not guilty.' "

This is bull-moose psychology and would explain several billions of wars.

But if the two races are so cleanly divided, whom is Ouspensky talking to, whom is he persuading? There must be a lot of people on the edge, uncomfortable in either camp, perhaps some prominent ones among them. Ouspensky takes many quotations from *The Varieties of Religious Experience*; but he also quotes, rather maliciously and without comment, a passage from *A Pluralistic Universe* which suggests that William James never got beyond a reading acquaintance with the absolute: "First, you and I," wrote James, "just as we are in this room, and the moment we get below the surface, the unutterable itself! Doesn't this show a singularly indigent imagination? Isn't this brave universe made on a higher pattern with room in it for a long hierarchy of beings?" Alas, where is Memorial Hall, where is the Arboretum?

Ouspensky hints that if he wanted to he could tell of other methods of getting revelation besides the anaesthetic one. He recommends another book of his, *The Wisdom of the Gods*, to people who desire a truly ineffable experience of the absolute.

*Tertium Organum*, however, closes not with an exhortation to a more virtuous life, but with a rather strong statement in favour of freedom. Positivism, says Ouspensky (and by positivism he means materialism that goes to church and materialism that does not), was once a force of liberation, breaking apart the old dualistic tyranny. But now, the very people who formerly fought it are its most vigorous supporters. The method is no good any more, and at some future time it will be defined as a system "by which it was possible not to think of real things and to limit oneself to the region of the unreal and illusory." The idea of evolution is dead, and reincarnation along with it. The very popularity of the idea of progress compromises progress seriously. It was to be expected. Dead people cannot keep even true ideas alive. But to the living "all that arrests the motion of thought—is false."

W. C. BLUM

## A CRITIC OF MUSIC

MUSICAL PORTRAITS. *By Paul Rosenfeld. 12mo. 314 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Howe. New York.*

THE author of Musical Portraits certainly cannot complain of having had his work unnoticed. The chorus of critical indignation—both in print and in private—that greeted its appearance made me rather curious to see what manner of book this might be that ruffled so many musical sensibilities.

Mr Rosenfeld is rather provocative. You can agree with him or disagree, but you will probably do neither without violence. His book is a series of studies of the work of some twenty composers, ranging from Debussy, Block, Stravinsky, and Ornstein back to Liszt and Berlioz. He begins with Wagner, and what he writes of the Baireuth master has caused much head-wagging, and will cause more. Wagner is no longer vitally significant, he thinks:

"Of late a great adventure has befallen us. . . . We who were born and grew under the sign of Wagner have witnessed the twilight of the god. He has receded from us. He has departed from us into the relative distance into which during his hour of omnipotence he banished all other composers.

He has been displaced. A new music has come into being, and drawn near. . . . Little by little, during the past few years . . . our relation to him has been changing. Something within us has moved. . . . A song of Moussorgsky's or Ravel's, a few measures of Pelléas or *Le Sacre du Printemps*, a single fine moment in a sonata of Scriabine's or a quartet or a suite of Bloch's, give us a joy, an illumination, a satisfaction that little of the older music can equal."

Which is probably just the tone in which many a post-Elizabethan literary critic wrote about Shakespeare. I'm not so sure that you can pack Wagner off to bed like that, with a pat on the head and a penny: "Run along, now, Richard. Daddy's busy. Mr Scriabine and Mr Stravinsky are downstairs, waiting to talk

business." The old man has a good deal of vitality left, and who ever seeks to give his bones a decent burial risks having to sit on the grave to keep the departed in his place. Certainly his hold upon the public at large has not lessened. This argument, I admit, might also be advanced for Puccini, but in Wagner's case I think it is valid, for Wagner, like Shakespeare, was one of the popular great. It was the critics and other professionals, not the public, who fought him at the start.

As for his influence upon composers, it is still inescapable. If you want to know why Wagner is immortal, play a certain passage written by a man who was opposed to Wagner's scheme of things with every fibre of his being—Claude Debussy. Turn to page 56 of the piano-vocal score of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and play the "fountain" theme, the first bar at the top of the page. Now turn to the score of *Das Rheingold*, and play the first two bars that are sung after the curtain rises, Woglinde's "Weia! Waga! Woge, du Welle!" and hear what you shall hear. It is not that Debussy is plagiarizing Wagner. It is merely that Wagner said "water," in music, and when Debussy wanted to say "water," simply and directly—he had to say "water," too. Wagner said certain simple, fundamental things in music, and said them right. It is as though some one man had thought of the words "fire," "water," "forest."

To me the glory of Shakespeare is not "To be or not to be," but a phrase like "making night hideous", which has become, not Shakespeare, but English idiom. And the glory of Wagner is not the *Meistersinger* overture. It is the discovery that the melodic interval of the minor seventh, downward, is the word "love." To get away from Wagner completely, a man would have to invent a new system of forming melody; and not even Debussy, his arch-antithesis, succeeded in doing that.

So when Mr Rosenfeld says, "We of our generation have finally found the music that is so creatively infecting for us"—meaning Stravinsky, Ornstein, and the others—he makes me feel, for the first time in my life, elderly. And a bit indignant. Who the devil does he mean by that "we?" Certainly not I, without reservations. Is senility upon me? Have I, then, become one of the Old Guard? However, Mr Rosenfeld also says:

"The course of time . . . has brought Berlioz the closer to

us and shown him great. . . . It is as though the world had had to move to behold Berlioz, and that only in a day germane to him and among the men his kin could he assume the stature right-fully his, and live."

So I am content. If the younger generation, which I so trust-fully joined, is going in for Berlioz, put me among the gaffers!

Time was when Richard Strauss seemed on the way to dominat-ing the musical world well-nigh as completely as had the other Richard. But that time is past. The artistic degeneration of one who was once the significant figure in modern music is analysed by Mr Rosenfeld in what is in some ways the best essay in the book. To him it is the old story of genius in a vessel too weak to hold it:

"It is as the victim of a psychic deterioration that one is forced to regard this unfortunate man. The thing that one sees happen-ing to so many people about one, the extinction of a flame, the withering of a blossom, the dulling and coarsening of the sensibili-ties, the decay of the mental energies, seems to have happened to him, too. . . . He is the type of man unfaithful to himself in some fundamental relation throughout his deeds. Many people have thought a love of money the cause of Strauss's decay. . . . The truth is that he has rationalized his unwillingness to go through the labor pains of creation by pretending to himself a con-stant and a great need of money. . . ."

In the chapters upon Gustav Mahler and Ernest Bloch he dis-cusses frankly and sensibly the problem of the Jew as artist. The reason the Jewish race has produced so few great artists, he says, is that the Jew, feeling himself an alien in a predominately Christian and Occidental civilization, so seldom has the courage to be true to his racial feelings. Not that he must write "Jewish" music, particularly, but "he must not attempt to deny his modes of apprehension and realization because they are racially coloured. He must possess spiritual harmony. The whole man must go into his expression." It was just this spiritual harmony Mahler lacked.

"There was in him the frenetic unconscious desire to rid himself of the thing he had come to believe inferior. And rather than ex-

press it, rather than speak in his proper idiom, he made, unaware to himself, perhaps, the choice of speaking through the voices of other men . . . of accepting sterility and banality and impotence rather than achieving a power of speech."

The other, the Swiss Jew, however, has had just that courage, just that fearless and simple racial consciousness.

"There is music of Ernest Bloch that is a large, a poignant, an authentic expression of what is racial in the Jew. . . . There are moments when this music makes one feel as though an element that had remained unchanged throughout three thousand years, an element that is in every Jew and by which every Jew must know himself and his descent, were caught up in it and fixed there. . . . And yet, the 'Jewish composer' that the man is so often said to be, he most surely is not. . . . It is only that as a Jew it was necessary for Ernest Bloch to say yes to his own heredity before his genius could appear."

There are interesting chapters on the Russians. Borodine he rather overrates, I think, forgiving him too much banality for the sake of his few master-strokes. He is cruel, but I am afraid just, to Rachmaninoff. To Rimsky-Korsakoff he is unfair. His music, he says, is "like one of the books, full of gay pictures, which are given to children"—which is, on the whole, true—and then hammers him soundly for being objective and frivolous! And why not? Who wants profundity from jolly, bearded, bespectacled Rimsky, the Santa Claus of music, bless his silly old heart! There are so many of us to beat our breasts, and so few to beat the drum. A picture-book is a comforting thing at times.

To Moussorgsky he pays eloquent and moving tribute; but admirable as the chapter is, some of it seems based upon a misconception; for Mr Rosenfeld shows no realization of the extent to which Moussorgsky utilized Russian folk-music in his work. He takes it for granted, apparently, that all of the themes in the operas and cantatas are of Moussorgsky's own invention. "They are so much like folk-tunes that one wonders whether they were not produced hundreds of years ago and handed down by generations of Russians," he writes. And that is precisely what many of them



are—folk-tunes; and Mr Rosenfeld ought to know it if he's going to discuss them. Of the death scene in Khovanchtchina he writes:

"At the moment that the old boyar . . . goes to his doom, there is intoned by his followers the sweetest melody that Moussorgsky wrote or could write."

That's all very well, but Moussorgsky didn't write it. It is a Great-Russian wedding song, which Moussorgsky got from a peasant named M. F. Shishto. He gave the tune to Rimsky-Korsakoff, who published it, with an account of its origin, in his Collection of Russian Folksongs, Opus 24 (1874; Volume I, page 92).

Of the coronation scene in Boris he says:

"Then like Boris himself, Moussorgsky sweeps through in stiff blazoned robes, crowned with the domed, flashing Slavic tiara."

This refers, I imagine, to the Gloria chorus, which is a peasant "song of praise" as familiar in Russian folk-music as Malbrouck is in French—and a good deal older.

It is hard for us Americans, who have no folk-music, to realize the extent to which Russian composers use folk-tunes in their works. The famous *andante cantabile* of the Tchaikovsky string quartet, Opus 11, is the tune of a peasant song about "little Ivan, who sat on the divan, drinking rum"; the fast theme of the 1812 Overture, the variations theme in the finale of the Fourth Symphony, most of the choruses in Rimsky's *Sniegourochka* and *A Night in May*, are Russian folk-tunes; so is the postilions' dance in *Petrushka*. As a matter of fact, the score of *Boris* is at least one-fourth folk-music; the proportion is even greater in *Khovanchtchina*. *Varlaam's* song in the tavern scene of *Boris*, two themes in the great folk scene in Act II, the Gloria chorus already referred to, the music at the climax of the revolution scene, are all folk-tunes; and there are many others.

This is the very essence of Moussorgsky's greatness: that, heeding Glinka's admonition, "the people are the creators; you are but the arrangers," he listened, humbly and selflessly, to the voice of his country as she spoke through the songs of her people. And how



close the union was between him and his native land, how utterly he thought in terms of folk-music, is attested by the very fact that Mr Rosenfeld has not always known which was Moussorgsky and which was Russia.

I can't say that I share Mr Rosenfeld's enthusiasm for Ornstein and the later Stravinsky. Here are fragments of what he has to say of them:

"The new steel organs of men have begotten their music in *Le Sacre du Printemps*. For with Stravinsky, the rhythms of machinery enter musical art. . . . Through him music has become again cubical, lapidary, massive, mechanistic. . . . There are come to be great, weighty, metallic masses, molten piles and sheets of steel and iron, shining adamantine bulks . . . rhythm that lunges and beats and reiterates and dances with all the steely tirelessness of the machine."

"Ornstein is a mirror held up to the world of the modern city. The first of his real compositions are like fragments of some cosmopolis of caves and towers of steel. . . . They . . . record . . . all the violent forms of the city, the beat of frenetic activity, the intersecting planes of light, the masses of the masonry with the tiny, dwarf-like creatures running in and out, the electric signs staining the inky nightclouds. . . . While one speculates whether these pieces are music or not, one discovers that one has entered through them into the life of another being, and through him into the lives of a whole upgrowing generation."

I'm not competent to discuss *Le Sacre du Printemps*, as I have heard it only on the piano. But assuming that all that Mr Rosenfeld says of it is true, that Stravinsky is mechanism become music, and that Ornstein is a mirror held up to the modern city, I don't want it. It seems to me too literal and at the same time too literary a basis for authentic music. I don't think men can write preludes and ballets expressive of power plants and the housing problem, any more than they can write symphonic poems about the spirit of collective bargaining.

And I do think that Ornstein and Stravinsky and Malipiero are demanding too much thought of their auditors and doing too little

thinking themselves. They put down the facts—the beat of dwarf feet upon pavements, the tireless, lifeless energy of machinery, yes. But who cares about the facts? The truth is what counts. I don't want music talking in terms of machinery; I want machinery expressed in terms of music. These men don't disturb me, as do Bloch and Scriabine. They bore me. I'm bored with their imitations of noises—I can go hear the real noises—and their monotonous cacaphony. Of course, it sounds like cacaphony because I'm not used to it, and it probably sounds all alike for the same reason that Chinamen all look alike to me: I'm not well acquainted.

However, Mr Rosenfeld sincerely admires them. Stravinsky is one of his gods, and the phrase "Leo Ornstein and the Age of Steel" flits through the book like a refrain.

One notable feature of the book the extracts will have shown: Mr Rosenfeld knows how to write. This fact alone would make him of the minority among those who write at and about music. His style is nervous, clear, ironical if not humorous, and he uses words with precision. A few pet unusual words he over-uses. "Magistral," for instance, is a good word, but after its fourth or fifth appearance one begins to wonder rather wistfully what has happened to "masterly" or "authoritative." One of the best bits of characterization I have read in a long time is his miniature portrait of Liszt:

"You draw from your violin passionate laments. In a sort of ecstasy you celebrate Hungaria. Then, smiling brilliantly, you pass the hat."

A fine phrase is that describing Sibelius' orchestral works—"full of the gnawing of bassoons and the bleakness of the English horn." He writes tenderly and beautifully of "the great, grave, passionate, resigned creature that was Brahms." The whole passage, which is too long to quote here, might serve as the credo of all good and honest artists.

A well-written, interesting, sincere, exasperating book. In other words, a book worth reading.

DEEMS TAYLOR

## BRIEFER MENTION

**TAMARISK TOWN**, by Sheilla Kaye-Smith (12mo, 393 pages; Dutton), deteriorates slowly like the town it describes; the author seems a little uncertain when she dips into sociology instead of confining herself to the natural processes of the soil. The hero, however, is as full-length a portrait as she ever attempted; he looms up grandiloquently against the background of the little watering place he created and then destroyed in the unstable pursuit of a dream.

**HILLS OF HAN**, by Samuel Merwin (12mo, 365 pages; Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis), is a story of a journalist and by a journalist, retailing rather journalistic impressions of a revolution in Hansi, and ending with a wedding in a mission compound to the accompaniment of Chinese flageolets. Written without any very deep conviction, it leaves the final impression of a honeymoon trip to Chinatown in a white bus outlined with jerky paper lanterns.

**HEY RUB-A-DUB-DUB**, by Theodore Dreiser (12mo, 312 pages; Boni & Liveright), holds American life under a competent but somewhat foggy microscope, disclosing its artistic shortcomings and its social defects with literal accuracy. Democracy, art, sex, labour, newspapers, and millionaires come successively under the lens, while Dreiser sets down his findings with all a greengrocer's assiduity, and not a little of a greengrocer's unimaginative painstaking. Here is a surprising absence of the creative instinct in a creative writer. Even iconoclasm is entitled to its exhilarative intervals, but Dreiser dons the cowl of a carping critic, and makes such a solemn business of his expostulation that he might well pass for one of the puritans whom he abjures. If he had left out some of the lengthy passages in which he reiterates what every one concedes, and replaced them with a vital, creative impulse, woven out of artistic experience, his book would be closer to kindling the imagination, and further from kindling the furnaces of the Philistines.

PETER JAMESON, by Gilbert Frankau (12mo, 431 pages; Knopf), is in keeping with the newest invention in novel-writing, the thesis that four years of slaughter in France purifies all Englishmen. Peter thought only of business before the war, but the trenches made him sensitive, so that he returns with a true love for his wife, whom he had formerly treated just as a "good pal." The once saddened Patricia realizes that at last her husband loves her, so that she can now love him; she nurses him back to health, and for the first time in her life she sees the beauty and dignity of bedroom thoughts. The story ends on Armistice Day, with every one drinking "in token of civilization's triumph over the Beast."

FOUR MYSTERY PLAYS, by Rudolph Steiner, translated by H. Col-lison, S. M. K. Gandell, and R. T. Gladstone (in two volumes; 12mo, 560 pages; Putnam), will doubtless command the attention of the author's disciples, but they are too formidable to win the interest of the average outsider. The plays form a continuous series, intended to "reveal the psychic development of man up to the moment when he is able to pierce the veil and see into the beyond." The blank verse translation is adequate, but hardly inspired.

CHILL HOURS, by Helen Mackay (12mo, 191 pages; Duffield), justifies a belated entry into the domain of war sketches by a refreshing simplicity of treatment and an unfailing sensitiveness in conception. Now that the feverish flood of war books has subsided, one welcomes a writer who seeks to do something besides capitalize human emotion.

THE FUNCTION OF THE POET, by James Russell Lowell; collected and edited by Albert Mordell (12mo, 224 pages; Houghton Mifflin), sets forth a sheaf of critical essays which will tip the scales of his rating neither on way nor the other. They are pleasant, scholarly, informal; they polish off literary subjects gracefully, even if not dazzlingly. A book for Lowell admirers to welcome, and for others to use perhaps—in the phrase of Van Wyck Brooks—"to stop the gap where a great critic ought to have been."

AN edition of *THE LIFE OF JAMES MCNEILL WHISTLER*, by E. R. and J. Pennell (8vo, illus., 454 pages, Lippincott, Philadelphia), so far revised and corrected and improved in detail as to justify the publisher's claim that it is virtually a new work, does not at all diminish the high esteem which the original editions won for the authors. There will always have to be special monographs about special things in the life of this painter, who became an obsession with the wits of his time for a very secondrate sharpness of speech, and who is likely to be an obsession with painters and amateurs for many generations, because he worked hard and thought hard about his art. A book giving, in addition to Whistler's personal history, the story of many of the paintings as they were done, and discussing with the sure words of authentic artists the methods and the theories of Whistler's creations, is, to use a mild word, invaluable. And the book, because of the treatment no less than because of the subject, is vastly entertaining.

A *GUIDE TO RUSSIAN LITERATURE (1820-1917)*, by Moissaye J. Olgin (12mo, 323 pages; Harcourt, Brace and Howe). The grouping of the material in this rather "sketchy" volume is somewhat inadequate. Authors whose influence was very small are at times given more attention and space than is seemly in comparison to those who are very characteristic and important both from the historical and psychological point of view. The chapter, *The Recent Tide*, which is of special interest for a student of contemporary Russia, is thoroughly incomplete. Such authors as Shmeliov, Sourgouchov, A. N. Tolstov, and Igor Sievierianin who are the real expressions of the modern Russian spirit are not mentioned at all and the chapter thus fails to throw much light upon Russia of the last decade or so.

*THE DEATH OF TITIAN*, by Hugo Von Hoffmannsthal; translated from the German by John Heard, Jr. (16mo, 27 pages; Four Seas, Boston), is a forthright translation of a very glamorous poem. The dramatic form, unfortunately for the translator, is only skin-deep. Essential drama, apart from its verbal expression, loses nothing in a new language: poetry, and *The Death of Titian* in particular, lose most everything.

**THE GUARDS CAME THROUGH**, and Other Poems, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (12mo, 76 pages; Doran), was published, says the preface, only on account of the demand for its contents as recitations. Indeed nothing so good for Friday afternoon readings in public schools has been written since *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. More sophisticated audiences are beginning to demand authentic horrors, however, and show some impatience with the vicarious bravery of old men by the fire in England.

**JAPAN: REAL AND IMAGINARY**, by Sydney Greenbie (12mo, 460 pages; Harper), is a downright judgement of Japan, people, customs, morals, and values, by a young American who, spending two years there, keeps an accurate record of his actions and reactions, and sets them down without fear or conscious bias. It is real as far as the author can see, and not very imaginary. It is the best book on actual Japan, by an American, in some time; best from the viewpoint of fact, not poesy nor romantic charm. No one interested in the Far East as related to America should miss it.

**OUR ECONOMIC AND OTHER PROBLEMS**, by Otto H. Kahn (8vo, 420 pages; Doran), has the defect of all collections of speeches and writings done for special occasions. That is, the fundamental ideas must be pieced together by the reader. In this case the authority of the writer and the frankness of the writing make the effort worth while. The chapter on the railroads will be of less interest, though of great importance in itself, than that on labour and capital. Mr Kahn holds to the belief that underproduction is the primary cause of poverty and holds the balance of blame between the workers and their employers. A liberal attitude, totally without radicalism, in the sense that the author accepts the present order of things and looks for amelioration, for commonsense changes, and does not care to foresee the destruction of the system of which he is himself an avowed enthusiast.



## THE THEATRE

**C**ONTINUING the pleasant exercise of speculating about printed plays, begun in the previous issue of *THE DIAL* and destined to end abruptly as the New Season (thrilling words!) approaches, we come to *THE INWARD LIGHT* (Knopf) which was written by Allan Davis and Anna R. Stratton and has an introduction by Walter Prichard Eaton. The drama of conscience in the midst of war has not generally excited our playwrights. From *SECRET SERVICE* (or was it *SHENANDOAH*?) to *THE COPPERHEAD* we have had action, action all the way, with the result that we haven't, simply, a corpus of plays to which the student of American war psychology can refer. I would far more readily see *SECRET SERVICE* a second time than see *L'ELEVATION* anywhere except at the Comédie Française or any time except during the Great War. For all that, *L'ELEVATION* is a finer play and holds something beyond the passing interest. In *THE INWARD LIGHT* the authors have set forth the struggle in a little Quaker village during the Civil War. Needless to indicate that some of the items are "remarkably contemporary"; needless to say that the occasional intrusion of a phrase we fancied our own jolts us into a recognition of some eternal traits of human character. The difficulty about this play is that it is dull, at least to read, and one fears that it would be made interesting on the stage only by some cheapening of its better qualities. It lacks, in short, what *SECRET SERVICE* has, and what every play should have: a continuous, well-constructed action, a consuming interest growing out of that action. The beauty of the French drama is that it has always been able to treat a psychological theme in terms of action which could be visualized and created on the stage. Nothing Mr Eaton says of the spiritual fineness of this play is amiss; the play lacks that very secondary, but indispensable commodity, cleverness. As for cleverness, one has no excessive opinion of it for itself. The next paragraph explains why.

Mr Philip Moeller's *SOPHIE* (Knopf) is an acted play which gains by publication, for the maddening pointlessness of the witty



lines is not so apparent when one does not have to listen to actors and actresses trying to make their own points out of them. Mr Moeller has the supreme romantic fault, the fault of believing that Japanese are Oriental to themselves, that there is a special essence of exoticism which makes Sourabaya exotic in and to itself, and that men and women who seem artificial to us were artificial in their own time. Miss Emily Stevens encouraged this delusion on his part; the drastic and ironic commonplace atmosphere of Mr Moeller's early playlet about Helen of Troy has been lost in the effort to give a social tone which succeeded only in robbing the play of all its chances. For to project any illusion in an historical play, the people on the stage must be taking each other for granted, must be totally real to each other; there must be no sly asides from the actors to the audience, no confession that they are aware of the brightness and beauty illuminating the scene. Mr Moeller's wit, when it is read, is at least not stupefying; received across the footlights, it gives only the effect of a silly charlatanism. The same thing, done without any restraint, succeeds in *LA BELLE HELENE* because the author does not pretend. And Mr Moeller seems to go through every variation of the word: pretend, pretensions, pretentiousness.

The summer's reading was interrupted by several lyric outbursts. *THE FOLLIES*, by all report, have changed their atmosphere and tone, being far less revue and far more the exhibition of beauty, chastely draped one assumes, colourful, gay. The change in our entertainment is more marked by the Shubert production at the Century. Here the midnight show is almost an unblemished revel of lightness, beauty, and fun. If the reader imagines that this is no new thing in the American light theatre, his experience has been happier than mine. He has not seen the pomposities and has not heard the selections from operas, nor had to suffer the tortures of aesthetic dancing on the variety stage. The Promenade has exercised the virtue of excision. To enjoy a show, without remorse and without stultifying one's self, is a rare experience.

GILBERT SELDES

## COMMENT

**W**E trust that our readers are not misled by our failure to report on politics as we report on even the minor arts. It is not essentially lack of interest so much as lack of space. The arts are not excessively noticed in our daily press and politics not too frequently mentioned in these pages. That is all. Yet, at this moment, these linked acerbities of days too long drawn out which mark a political campaign, we do take notice. It arrives to our consciousness that so far neither party has cried out that God fights exclusively on its side. They are turling to the heavier battalions, and this reticence about the Deity is pleasant. They care enough, we are sure. But they do not boast. To this point the arrogance and the fervour of the war have subsided. We wonder only whether the intelligence we read so much about, the political sense, the double-dealing and the high diplomacy of a convention and of a campaign, are not at least as much over-advertised as the similar virtues in the High Commands during the war. The formula for tremendous wisdom was discovered by a day labourer in the Garden of Eden, we believe. It is that if you stumble and fall, you call it an accident. But if you stumble and fall on your adversary, you call it a manoeuvre. The march-past of candidates, big and little, impresses us as a stumbling match; but we are content to know that the idea of a great man has become repugnant to Americans. (Wherever did they get the idea that they had experienced the influence of such a one?) Instead we shall have an advertised president. Twelve mystic words for one, a sibilant sentence for the other; two agencies will run the campaigns, and will "sell" their candidates to the American people. Quaint idea! Precious thought! And with such brutal frankness set before us. Really we are moved . . . even to the point of casting a ballot for the best man.

MR GILMORE of the Christian Science Committee on Publication has been kind enough to bring to our attention a misleading implication in regard to the scholarly attainments of Mrs Eddy which appeared in an article by Mr Ananda

Coomaraswamy in the June DIAL. Certain facts laid before us by Mr Gilmore make it evident that Mrs Eddy had the advantage of a much better education than anybody on THE DIAL staff (which comprises nothing more exceptional than a scattering of collegiate degrees). Beyond this admission we can scarcely go—except into the unknown. May we add that the Scientists seem to us much more admirable in their consistency than certain desultory readers of THE DIAL, who criticize the followers of Mrs. Eddy for pretending that pain is non-existent, and, who, almost in the same breath, object to modern realistic fiction on the ground that "there are so many pleasant things in the world to write about, why . . ." To Mr Menken the task of making a catalogue of ennui and barbarities traceable to the repressions in American literature.

HAVING been told that a very practical comic weekly with a misleading name had taken a fall out of THE DIAL, we looked up the copy in question and found what we were after. It was just; it was amusing even to us. We were encouraged to read the rest of the copy. It contained:

1. Chestnuts which recalled our comparatively recent childhood.
2. Animadversions on contemporary institutions, for which the adjective vulgar is wretchedly inadequate.
3. A drawing by the founder of a venerable school of American illustrators, among the representatives of which he is considered the most presentable.
4. More drawings, style 1880.
5. A dismal cartoon by a celebrated Dutch cartoonist who, previous to the armistice, appeared to be enjoying himself thoroughly. This cartoon also in the American style. Doubtless he is tired of having the exchange against him. Or perhaps he is dead. The number of vertebrae in the skeleton is perfectly correct.

6. Mild deliberations on recent political events by a much-beloved, whimsical deliberator, who is credited by his friends with several notorious witticisms. Perhaps the only wit in the concern.

We wish the magazine every success.

In another sixty years, America will have put up for and with this sort of thing for a century.

## Educational Service Department

Beginning with this issue THE DIAL will open a department in its advertising pages in which will be found notices of educational institutions which are applying the scientific principles of modern psychology to the development of an improved type of education.

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